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PERSIAN TALES

WRITTEN DOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN
THE ORIGINAL KERMĀNĪ AND BAKHTIĀRĪ

AND TRANSLATED BY

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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1919

CONTENTS

KERMĀNĪ TALES

	PAGE
1. THE WOLF AND THE GOAT	3
2. THE CITY OF NOTHING-IN-THE-WORLD	6
3. THE FORTUNE-TELLER	9
4. SŪSKŪ AND MŪSHŪ	14
5. THE MARTEN-STONE	19
6. THE SNAKE-PRINCE SLEEPY-HEAD	25
7. QĒYTĀS THE COLT	33
8. NUKHUDŪ, OR MASTER PEA	43
9. MUSHKIL GUSHĀ, REMOVER OF DIFFICULTIES	48
10. THE JEALOUS SISTERS	58
11. THE PRINCE AND THE PERĪ	63
12. THE IDIOT BOY WHO BECAME KING	70
13. LITTLE FĀTIMA	79
14. THE BOY WHO BECAME A BULBUL	89
15. THE PRINCE WHO DIDN'T EXIST	94
16. THE GOLDEN LAMP-STAND	96
17. THE WOLF-AUNT—A MORAL FOR HUSBANDS	104
18. NĪM TANAK, OR HALF-BOY	108
19. THE BROTHER WHOSE LUCK WAS ASLEEP	113

PERSIAN TALES

	PAGE
20. THE FOX'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA	118
21. THE SHAWL-WEAVER AND THE SEVEN SPINSTERS	124
22. THE ORANGE AND CITRON PRINCESS	135
23. THE WISE QĀZĪ	148
24. MUHAMMAD TĪRANDĀZ THE ARCHER	150
25. THE COUNTRY OF FOOLS	154
26. ROADS AND SHORTCUTS, OR NO GAINS WITHOUT PAINS	160
27. THE GRATEFUL CORPSE	169
28. THE PRAYING BAKER	176
29. BALDHEAD AND THE SCANTY-BEARDS	180
30. THE SAD TALE OF THE MOUSE'S TAIL	191

BAKHTIĀRĪ TALES

31. THE MAGIC BIRD	197
32. THE GAZELLE MAIDEN AND THE GOLDEN BROTHERS	212
33. AHMAD GIRDŪ AND HIS TWO BROTHERS	220
34. THE HUNTER AND THE WHITE SNAKE	225
35. FĀYĪZ AND HIS PERĪ WIFE	232
36. THE MERCHANT OF ISFAHĀN AND HIS FAITHLESS WIFE	236
37. THE COWHERD WHO WOKE THE PRINCESS	244
38. TĀLING, THE HALF-BOY	251
39. HOW FĀTIMA KILLED HER MOTHER AND WHAT CAME OF IT	256
40. THE MAN WHO BOUGHT THREE PIECES OF ADVICE	269
41. THE PERĪ AND THE KING'S SON	284
42. THE HEMP-SMOKER'S DREAM	288
43. THE WOLF-BRIDE	291
44. THE MAN WHO WENT TO WAKE HIS LUCK	293

CONTENTS

vii

	PAGE
45. THE SAD STORY OF THE BEETLE, THE MOUSE, AND THE ANT	297
46. TORTOISE BOWL-ON-THE-BACK AND THE FOX	304
47. THE FOX AND HIS ORDER FROM THE KING	306
48. RAMAZÂN OF HAMADÂN AND THE POOR LABOURER	308
49. THE SHEPHERD WHO FOUND A TREASURE	311
50. THE MERCHANT AND THE SAFFRON	313
51. THE SEVEN DAUGHTERS	317
52. SHÂH ABBÂS AND THE POOR MOTHER	321
53. THE APPARITION OF THE PROPHET KHIZR	325
54. THE IMPIOUS THORN-GATHERER	328
55. THE KING AND THE TWO BLIND BEGGARS	331
56. THE FATE OF THE KING'S ONLY SON	333
57. HAIDER BÊG AND SAMAMBER	335
58. THE BAKER AND THE GRATEFUL FISH	344
PRONUNCIATION OF THE PERSIAN WORDS	349
VOCABULARY	351

ILLUSTRATIONS

IN COLOUR

Thus Fātima became motherless (page.79)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
“Divine now for me”	<i>To face page 10</i>
“You have burnt my snake-skin”	” 26
“Who are you?”	” 44
They played about in the lake	” 54
He took the girl home	” 100
As beautiful as the moon on her fourteenth night	” 142
“Tell me what evil this man had done”	” 170
Then Sultān Mahmad threw her to the ground	” 218
“I shall dash his brains into his mouth”	” 238
At last the owner of it too came up	” 252
“Mother, your youngest brother’s dead!”	” 256
He came back and divided them amongst them all	” 316
The Thorn-gatherer paid him the money and bought the pill	” 330
“Samamber has a lover in Īrān”	” 338
They formed themselves into a raft	” 344

IN THE TEXT

“And on you be peace!”	PAGE 83
The Div was forced to take up his weapons and go out	111

	PAGE
“Have you nothing you could give me to drink?” . . .	157
Mahmad sat down on the carpet and rose up into the air . . .	207
They immediately began to quarrel . . .	249
Very quietly she slipped two fingers into her pocket and extracted the ring	277
“How ever have they come here?” . . .	281
He found his Luck lying sound asleep . . .	295

PERSIAN TALES



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You must find yourself a ship, you must sail, sail, sail,
Then buy a horse and ride him on and on,
Up the river gorges, over mountain, over vale,
Till you come to the gardens of Kermān.

The pathways of our garden are all primly paved with brick,
Tiny streams on every side are flowing by,
Pink roses by the million cluster thick, thick, thick,
You can hardly see the branches if you try.

The fairest of our roses is the dazzling Nastaran—
Five times the height of Daddy is the tree—
And from head to foot it's covered (you may count them if you can)
With roses snowy white for you and me.

And round us is the green lucerne, and over us the sun,
And far away the mountains and the snow,
Let's creep into the shadow and hear the water run,
And the dragon-flies shall brush us as they go.

And as we breathe the roses our minds will fall asleep,
And, dreaming, dream the dreams of long ago,
Of evil Dīvs and Peris, and treasure-trove to keep—
For anything you've wanted, in a dream is true, you know.

The maidens are princesses with glorious shining tresses
And their faces, like the moon, are pure and bright,
And though the day is thund'ry, there is luck for all and sundry,
And whatever seems all wrong is coming right.

I

THE STORY OF THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a goat who had four children, one was Alil, one was Balil, one was Ginger Stick, and the fourth was Black Eyes.

One day she said : " Sit quietly here, children ; I'm going off to bring grass for you. If the wolf should come and knock, don't open the door for him. And if he says : ' I am your mother,' say : ' Put your hand in at the crack of the door,' and if you see that the hand is black, don't open the door, but if you see a red hand you'll know that it's your mother back again."

Now the wolf had all the time been listening, and as soon as the goat was gone he dyed his hand with henna to make it red, and came and knocked at the door. They called out : " Who's that ? "

" Open the door, I've brought grass for you," said he. " Show us your hand." The wolf ^{shoved} his hand in at the crack of the door, and when they saw that it was red they opened the door and let him in. So he carried off Alil and Balil and Ginger Stick, but Black Eyes ran away and hid.

When the mother goat came back she saw there was no one in the house and she began to call. Then Black Eyes came out of his hiding-place and told his mother how the wolf had carried off his brothers. So they went together and climbed on to the roof of the wolf's house. They saw that he was just cooking some *āsh*, and they threw down a handful of earth into it.

The wolf cried :

“ Who are you on my roof up there ?

You dare to throw earth in my *āsh*, you dare ?

My *āsh* all salty and bad you've made,

My eyes all blind and sad you've made.”

Then answered the goat :

“ The goat, the goat so fleet am I,

The goat with bells on her feet am I.

I can dance with my feet so fleet,

Leaping about on my hinder-feet.

You have stolen Alil of mine,

You have stolen Balil of mine,

You have stolen my Ginger Stick.”

And the wolf said : “ Yes, I've stolen them ” ; and the goat said : “ Come, let's go and fight.”

The goat went and got a skin and filled it full of curds and butter to make a nice present, and carried it off to the knife-grinder and said : “ Come along and sharpen my horns.”

The wolf went and got a skin too, but he was too stingy to put in butter or anything nice, so he blew it up with wind till it looked very full indeed, and took it for a gift to a man who was a tooth-puller, and he said : “ Come along and

sharpen my teeth.” The dentist wondered what his present was, and opened the top of the skin a little to peep in and see, but behold, there was only wind inside ! And the air ran out puff, puff, puff.

He said nothing at all, but instead of sharpening the wolf’s teeth he pulled them all out, and in the holes he put little pointed twists of cotton-wool that looked like nice sharp, white teeth.

Then up came the goat and they went off to fight. First they came to a little stream of water. The goat said : “ Come, let’s first drink our fill,” and she put her head down over the water, but she took care to drink none herself. The wolf drank and drank till he could drink no more.

Then the goat said : “ Come along, let’s jump across the stream,” and with that she leaped over neatly. The wolf went to jump over too, but he was so swollen up with water that he fell in. Then the goat smote him in the stomach with one of her sharp horns and tore it right open, and so he died.

And off she carried Alil and Balil and Ginger Stick, and brought them home again to Black Eyes.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

II

THE STORY OF THE CITY OF NOTHING-IN-THE-WORLD

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
GOD.

IN the town of Hīch ā Hīch, the city of Nothing-in-the-World, there was a girl who had fallen and scraped her shin very badly. After a few days, when the wound was a little better, she went to her aunt to get some cooling ointment for it. The old woman said : " I'm sorry I haven't any," but she gave her niece two eggs to take to the drug-seller in the bāzār, to see if he would give her some cooling ointment in exchange.

When the girl came back from the bāzār this is what she told her aunt :

I went to the bāzār, and on the way I lost the two eggs. I was very much upset, but I put my hand in my pocket and there I found a *jinnū*. I wanted to get my eggs back again, so I gave the *jinnū* to some people in the bāzār, who made me a minaret out of a needle.

I climbed and climbed right up to the top of the minaret, and I looked in every direction all round the town and saw that one of my eggs had turned into a hen and

was in an old woman's house, and the other had turned into a cock and was threshing corn far away in a village.

So I said to myself: "First, I'll go and get the cock," and I went out to the village and said to the peasants: "Give me back my cock, and his wages too, for he's been working for you." After a lot of bargaining we agreed that they should give me half a cow-load of their crop, which was rice. When they had weighed the crop my share was 25 *manns*, but I had no loading bags to put it in. So I killed a flea and skinned it and made myself a loading-bag out of the skin. Then I put my rice into it, and loaded it on my cock's back and started off, for I wanted to bring my rice to market.

We were very far away from town, and when we got to the second-last halting-place, two days' march out, the cock was sore-backed. I asked the people there: "What's to be done? Is there any remedy for this?" They said: "Burn the kernel of a walnut and rub it on his back and it will get well." So I half-burnt a walnut and put it on.

When I woke in the morning a large walnut tree had shot up and was growing from the cock's back. The village children had gathered round the tree and were throwing stones and clods of earth at it. I climbed a branch and saw that the clods had accumulated and covered about 100 *qasab*. I got a clod-breaker to come and make the ground level; and I saw that it would be a good soil to plant musk- and water-melons in, so I sowed both kinds of melons.

Next morning I saw that the earth had produced very large melons. I broke a big water-melon, but when I was cutting it my knife got lost. I put a bathing-cloth round my waist and went into the hollow of the half-melon to hunt for my knife.

PERSIAN TALES

I saw there was a town there, and it was very big and full of crowds and noise and traffic. I went to the door of a cook-shop and gave them a *jinnū* and bought a little *halīm* for myself and began to eat it. It tasted so very good that when I had eaten it all up I licked the bottom of the bowl so hard that it nearly broke.

I saw a hair at the bottom of the bowl and tried to catch hold of it to throw it away, but at the end of the hair there appeared a camel's leading-rope, and behind the rope there came seven strings of seven camels, all in a row, one behind the other, and each complete with all its gear.

They came out one after the other, and my knife was tied on to the tail of the last camel.



And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

you beat me with?"—"With the pole of the weighing-machine." "I'll die," said Sūskū. "Then," said Mūshū, "I'll beat you with my own little tail." And Sūskū said: "Right you are."

When they had agreed about this Sūskū went off to the bath. As she was coming out and was just crossing a little stream, she fell in. There was a farmer-man there who was managing the irrigation and watching the flow of the water. Sūskū called out to him: "Hullo, brother, run to Master Mousie and tell him that his lover and his sweetheart is in the water, and say: 'Bring a little ladder of gold and take your sweetheart out of the water.'" So off went the farmer and told Mūshū. Master Mousie ran to the door of the greengrocer's shop and stole two carrots, and with his little teeth he cut them up and carved them out and made a little ladder of gold and carried it to the stream. And he pulled Sūskū up out of the water, and they got married, and he was her husband, and she was his wife. And Master Mousie carried her off to his home.



One day he said: "Wife, I want some nice *āsh*. Go and cook me a little." As soon as he had gone out Sūskū made the broth and put the pot on the fire and cut up some fine strips of dough and went to put them in it, but the wind came and lifted her up in the air and threw her down into the pot of *āsh*. When poor Mūshū came home he saw that Sūskū had fallen into the pot of broth and been drowned. And so full of sorrow was he that he went to the fireplace and began to throw ashes on his head.

Just then a crow happened to pass that way and said to

Master Mousie : “ What’s the matter with you ? ” and he said :

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot
And Mūshū poured ashes on his head.”

And the crow said : “ Oh, I am so sorry,” and gave himself a shake and shook all his feathers out and went and sat on a tree.

And the tree asked : “ Crow, why have you shaken your feathers out ? ”

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot,
Mūshū poured ashes on his head,
And the crow shook his feathers out.”

The tree said : “ Oh, I am so sorry,” and gave herself a shake and shed all her leaves. The waters came to the foot of the tree to water her. They asked : “ Tree, why have you shed your leaves ? ”

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot,
Mūshū poured ashes on his head,
The crow shook his feathers out,
And the tree shed her leaves.”

The waters said : “ Oh, we are so sorry,” and they turned all muddy, and went out into the desert to water the corn. The corn asked : “ Waters, why are you all muddy ? ”

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot,
Mūshū poured ashes on his head,
The crow shook his feathers out,
The tree shed her leaves,
And the waters turned muddy.”

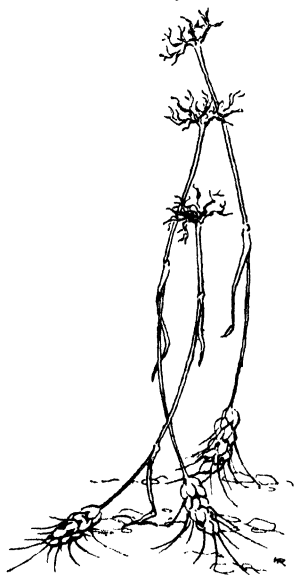
Then the stalks of corn said : “ Oh, we are so sorry,” and they put their heads on the ground and their feet in the air. The farmer happened to pass that way ; he asked : “ O stalks of corn, what are you all doing, standing on your heads ? ”

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot,
Mūshū poured ashes on his head,
The crow shook his feathers out,
The tree shed her leaves,
The waters turned muddy,
And the stalks of corn stood on their heads.”

Then the farmer said : “ Oh, I am so sorry,” and he fixed his spade in the ground and ran the handle of it right

through his body. The farmer’s daughter was bringing his dinner out to him, and she said : “ Daddy, how did you get like this ? ”

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot,
Mūshū poured ashes on his head,
The crow shook his feathers out,
The tree shed her leaves,
The waters turned muddy,
The stalks of corn stood on their heads,
And the farmer drove a spade through his body.”



Then the farmer’s daughter, who had a dish of curds in her

hand, said : “ Oh, I am so sorry,” and threw the curds all over herself and ran to her mother. Her mother was sitting beside the griddle cooking griddle-cakes, and she said : “ Darling, what have you done ? ”

“ Haven’t you heard ? Sūskū fell into the pot,
Mūshū poured ashes on his head,
The crow shook his feathers out,
The tree shed her leaves,
The waters turned muddy,
The stalks of corn stood on their heads,
The farmer drove a spade through his body,
And your daughter was covered with curds.”

Then her mother said : “ Oh, I am so sorry,” and cut off her two thumbs and threw them on the griddle, and they became griddle-cakes.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

V

THE STORY OF THE MARTEN-STONE

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
GOD.

THERE was a King who had a daughter, but he was never pleased with anything she did, and he found fault with her the whole day long. At last she grew very unhappy, and one day she began thinking what a sad life she was leading. So she took her slave-girl with her and went out of the big gate.

They walked and they walked and they walked till they reached a desert, and at last the door of a garden came in sight. The King's Daughter stepped forward and put her hand on the door. No sooner had she touched it than it flew open and she fell into the garden, but the door banged behind her and the Slave-girl was left outside. The Princess went for a stroll through the garden, and when she reached the back of it she saw a raised terrace and some one asleep on it. She drew nearer and climbed up on the terrace, and pulled down the sheet that covered the face. When she did so, she saw that it was a youth so very handsome that it were a sin merely to look at him. And all his body had been pricked with needles darned in and out all over him, so that there wasn't room for another one.

Then she noticed that some one had written a paper and put it beside the head of his couch, saying that if any one would watch by the youth forty nights and forty days without once falling asleep even for a second, and during all that time would only eat one walnut a day and drink only as much water as half a walnut shell would hold, and would pull all the needles out of his body, then at the end of forty days and nights he would sneeze and rise up.

Day by day the King's Daughter drew out the needles, and whenever sleep threatened to overtake her she would go to the door of the garden to visit the Slave-girl, and she would ask through the door: "Are you there? How are you getting on? Has anybody passed this way or not?" And so she continued watching till the fortieth day was come, and there were only three needles left to pull out.

Suddenly she heard the bells of a caravan, and she got up and came down off the terrace and went to the door. She knocked and said: "Who's that? What's the news? Where does the noise of bells come from?" The Slave-girl answered: "It's a caravan which has thrown down its loads here and made this a camping-ground. Then the Princess said: "Go to the leader of the caravan and bid him come and talk to me through the door." The Slave-girl called out to the leader of the caravan: "Come over here, my lady wants you." When he had come, the King's Daughter asked: "How much will you charge to lift up my Slave-girl and put her over into the garden to me?" He said: "One hundred tumāns." "Agreed," said the Princess. So he lifted the Slave-girl into the garden, and took his money and went away.

Then the King's Daughter told the Slave-girl the whole

tale of the forty days and nights, and she said : “ I’m feeling very ill. I shall just put my head down for one moment and go to sleep. Do you sit by the youth’s side, but do not touch him till I wake.”

As soon as the Princess had dropped off to sleep the Slave-girl drew down the sheet from the youth’s face and pulled out the last three needles. Suddenly he sneezed and rose up. And he said : “ Who are you ? Are you a hūrī, or a perī, or a daughter of man ? ” And she made answer : “ I am the daughter of a man.” And he asked again : “ Where did you come from ? How did you get here ? ”

Then the Slave-girl told him the whole story from the beginning, but gave herself out to be the King’s Daughter, and she pretended that the Princess who was sleeping over there was her Slave-girl. And all the hardship that the King’s Daughter had undergone and all the trouble she had taken the Slave-girl claimed as her own. The youth said : “ Very good. Now, would you like to be my wife ? ” And she said, “ Yes, nothing would please me better. You are the son of a King and I am a King’s Daughter, let us be husband and wife.”

While they were thus talking the real Princess woke up, and she perceived that her bad luck had done its work, and that all her labour and toil were wasted, nor was there any hope but in patience. She clasped her hands together and said : “ Praise be to Thee, O God ! Thanks be to Allah ! ” and after that she said neither “ Yea ” nor “ Nay,” and she became a slave and the other became a great lady.

Then the King’s Son ordered them to decorate and illuminate seven cities, and he took the Slave-girl to wife.

The King's Daughter worked in the house and in the kitchen at serving and cooking, and said not a word till after God had given three children to the Prince and his wife.

One day when the King's Son was going on a journey, he came to his wife and said : "What would you like me to bring back from my journey for you?" And she said whatever she wished for. Then he asked the children, and they said what they wished for. Then he turned to the woman, who he thought was a Slave-girl, and said : "And now, what present would you like me to bring you from my trip?" She said : "I want nothing but a marten-stone and a china doll."

At last he set out on his journey. Six months it lasted, and he had bought everything his wife and children had asked for. Then he remembered that the Slave-girl had wanted a marten-stone and a china doll. So he went to this caravanserai and that caravanserai, till at last, after a very long time, he found a merchant who said : "I've got one." When he came again to buy it the merchant asked him : "Whom do you want the marten-stone for?" "I've got a slave-girl at home," said the Prince, "and she asked me to buy her a marten-stone."

The merchant said : "O What's-your-Name, this is no slave-woman ; whoever she is, she must be the daughter of a king."—"Nonsense, fellow, I tell you she's my slave-girl." "That's impossible," answered the merchant, "she's no slave. Well, do you want to buy it or not?" And the King's Son said : "Yes."

"Well," said the merchant, "when you get back from your journey, you will give the stone to the slave-girl. When she has finished all her work she will go and sit in a quiet corner, and you will become acquainted with her

whole story ; and when she has poured out all her woes she will say :

“ Marten-stone, Marten-stone,
You are marten, I am marten,
Either you must break or I must break ! ”

The moment she has said this, you must run up quickly to her and grasp her firmly round the waist. If you don't hold her tight she will break, and she will die.”

To make a long story short, the Prince did just as he was told, and gave the stone to the Slave-girl. As soon as all her work was done, she went into the kitchen, sprinkled water on the floor and swept it, lit her candle, and sat down in a corner on the floor. She put the marten-stone and the china doll in front of her, and began to tell them all her woes. From the very beginning, when ill-luck had overtaken her, she told the stone everything to the very end. Then she said :

“ Marten-stone, Marten-stone,
You are marten, I am marten,
Either you must break or I must break ! ”

No sooner had she said these words than the King's Son came running up and grasped her firmly round the waist. Thereupon the stone burst and a little blood trickled out of it. The Prince took her in his arms and kissed her and caressed her.

Then he ordered them to take his wife, who was the wicked Slave-girl, and tie her to the tail of a wild horse and turn it loose into the desert.

When this was done he had seven cities decorated and illuminated all over again, and he solemnly married the

King's Daughter, and they sat down to live their lives together.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

VI

THE STORY OF THE SNAKE-PRINCE SLEEPY-HEAD

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a King who had a Wazīr, and both the King's wife and the Wazīr's wife were hoping for a child. One day the King said to the Wazīr : " If my child should be a daughter, and yours should be a son, we'll marry them to each other."

Now it happened that a Black Snake was born to the King's wife and to the Wazīr's wife a very beautiful little girl, and in course of time both of them grew up. When they were of marrying age the King said to the Wazīr : " Now you must give your daughter to my son." The name of the son was Mīz Mast o Khumār, which in English would be Prince Sleepy-Head, and the name of the daughter was Mèr-Nigā, or Eye of Grace. The Wazīr was afraid to refuse to obey the King's command, and they married the two to each other.

On the evening of the wedding the bride and groom took each other's hands, and when they were left alone together the King's son sloughed the skin of the Black

Snake, and, lo, he was a handsome youth. When morning came he crept into the skin again and became the same Black Snake as before.

After a while the King gradually heard rumours of how his son turned into a handsome youth each night, and he sent for his daughter-in-law and said : " You must do something to prevent my son's going back again into his snake-skin." Then the bride asked her husband : " If I wanted to burn your snake-skin, what ought I to do ? " He answered : " My skin could only be burnt in a fire made with the shell of an egg, the handle of a sweeping-brush, and the hair of a dog's tail. But if you burn my skin I shall disappear, and you will never see me more." The wife paid no heed to this warning, and the next time Mīz Mast o Khumār stepped out of his snake-skin she burnt it. As it blazed up, the Prince suddenly appeared and cried :

" You have burnt my snake-skin,
Never shall you see me more

—unless, indeed, you wear out seven pairs of iron shoes and seven paper cloaks in seeking me." When he had said these words he vanished.

Eye of Grace made preparation for the journey, and procured seven pairs of iron shoes and seven paper cloaks, and started out. She walked and she walked and she walked in every direction in the world, till at last her shoes and her cloaks were quite worn out. The very day that her seventh pair of iron shoes gave out she came to the bank of a stream of water and sat down for a little to bathe her face, for she was very tired. She saw a slave-girl coming to fill a jug, and asked : " Whose slave are you ? " The woman answered : " I am Prince Sleepy-Head's slave-girl."—" And where is

he?"—"He is here, and he is going to get married. He is taking his aunt's daughter to wife." Then Mèr Nigā asked: "Whom are you drawing that water for?"—"For Mīz Mast o Khumār; he wants to wash his hands." "Well," said Eye of Grace, "I am throwing a ring into the jug. When you pour the water over your master's hands, pour it all out to the very end, and the ring will fall on his hand," and with that she threw into the jug a ring that Mīz Mast o Khumār had given her for a keepsake.

The slave-girl went off and did just as she had been told to do. As soon as Prince Sleepy-Head saw the ring, he asked: "Where did this come from?" The slave-girl answered: "There was a strange young woman sitting on the bank of the stream, she threw it into my jug."

Mīz Mast o Khumār came out and recognised Mèr Nigā, and said: "Where have you been? Why have you come to certain death? If my aunt hears that you are here she will kill you. Now the only thing to be done is to take you with me and say you are a new slave-girl whom I have bought for my bride." Then he took a lock of his own hair and gave it to Eye of Grace, and said: "Whenever any harm threatens you, put one of these hairs in the fire, and I shall appear and get you out of trouble if I can." Then he blackened Mèr Nigā's face and carried her off in the guise of a slave-girl to his mother-in-law and said: "My Lady Aunt, I have brought a slave-girl for your daughter." "Oh, you son of an evil mother," cried she, "my daughter has no need of a new slave-girl." But Prince Sleepy-Head begged her to keep the girl, and at last she agreed. Privately he said to Mèr Nigā: "Whatever work they may give you to do, do it without a murmur."

Next day the aunt gave the new slave-girl a sweeping-

brush set with pearls, and said : " Sweep, and if a single one of these pearls falls out or is lost, I'll burn your father ! " Mèr Nigā took the brush, but the moment she put it to the ground all the pearls fell out. She put a hair into the fire, and immediately Mīz Mast o Khumār appeared. He saw what had happened, fastened in the pearls, and did the sweeping. Then he gave the brush back to Eye of Grace, and said : " Go and give it to my Lady Aunt." When she took the brush back, the aunt asked : " Is the sweeping done ? "—" Yes."—" This is no work of yours ; it is the work of Mīz Mast o Khumār, son of an evil mother."

In the same way, the day after they gave her a colander, and said : " Take water in this and sprinkle the floor," but however much she tried she could not. Then, for the second time, she put a hair in the fire, Prince Sleepy-Head appeared, and sprinkled the water for her, and said : " Go and give the colander back to my Lady Aunt." When she came and brought it back the aunt asked : " Well, is the sprinkling done ? "—" Yes."—" This is no work of yours ; this is the work of Mīz Mast o Khumār, son of an evil mother."

The day after that again the aunt filled a little casket full of biting insects, and put it in her hand and said : " This is a casket full of pearls ; take it off to Such and Such a place. On the way there you will see a horse's manger ; throw some bones into it. And you will see a dog tied up ; put down some straw in front of him. And any door that you see shut, leave it shut, and go in through any door you see that is open. And you will come to a hollow full of dirt and blood ; you mustn't go near it."

Eye of Grace started out, and on the way she became very curious to see what was in the casket. She lifted the

lid a very little, just to peep in, but immediately the insects were all over her from head to foot. Quickly she threw a hair in the fire. Prince Sleepy-Head at once appeared, collected all the insects again, and fastened down the lid. He gave the box back to her, and said : " Whatever my aunt told you to do you must do the exact opposite : put straw in the horse's manger, throw bones in front of the dog, and whenever you come to a doorway say : ' Peace be upon you ! ' and open all the doors that are shut and shut all the doors that are open. If you don't do this you will assuredly be killed. And when you come to the hollow full of dirt and blood, say : ' If only I had time, I should like to dip my finger into that nice honey and eat some.' And every doorway that you come to, say : ' Peace be upon you ! ' "

She went on and put straw in the manger, and threw bones to the dog, and opened the shut doors and closed the open ones, and when she saw the hollow full of dirt and blood she said : " If only I had time, I should like to dip my finger into that nice honey and eat some." And every doorway she came to she said : " Peace be upon you ! " till at last she had delivered the casket to Such and Such a place and turned to come back. Then the person to whom she had delivered it cried out from behind her in a loud voice : " Open door, catch her ! " But the door answered : " Why should I catch her ? You opened me, but it was she who closed me again." Then the voice cried : " Shut door, catch her ! " But the door said : " Why should I catch her ? You shut me, but it was she who opened me again."—" Dog, catch her ! "—" Why should I catch her ? You gave me straw ; it was she who gave me bones."—" Horse, catch her ! "—" Why should I catch her ? You gave me bones ; it was she who put straw in

my manger." Then the voice cried : " Dirt and blood, catch her ! " But they answered : " Why should we catch her ? You call us ' dirt and blood ' ; it was she who called us ' honey.' "

To cut a long story short, she got back safely at last, and when she arrived the aunt asked her : " Did you deliver the casket safely ? " Mèr Nigā said : " Yes." Then cried the Lady Aunt : " This is not your work ; it is the work of Mīz Mast o Khumār, son of an evil mother ! "

At last the wedding day came. On the evening of the wedding day the Lady Aunt said : " We shall fasten candles on the fingers of the slave-girl, that she may go in front and lighten the bride's path." So they fastened ten candles on to her fingers and lighted them. On the way, as she was walking in front of the bride, she kept saying : " Mīz Mast o Khumār, my fingers are burning." And he replied : " Nay, Mèr Nigā, it is the heart in my body which is burning." At last they reached the house.

Prince Sleepy-Head privately warned Mèr Nigā and said : " Now, be very careful to-night and say : ' God be with you, farewell ! ' to every one of the things in the house, and don't forget a single one." When the very end of the night was come Mīz Mast o Khumār cut off the bride's head and placed it on her breast, and carried off his Eye of Grace. And he took with him some reeds and a needle, some salt and a little sea-foam, and off they started.

Now it happened that Mèr Nigā had forgotten to say farewell to the one-pound weight. After they had gone a very little way, the one-pound weight began to jump about at the head of the Lady Aunt's bed, and cried : " Mīz Mast o Khumār has cut off your daughter's head and has run away with Eye of Grace." Then the Lady Aunt

STORY OF SNAKE-PRINCE SLEEPY-HEAD 31

and her husband, who were Dīvs, flew up in the air and pursued them.

Prince Sleepy-Head looked behind him and saw that in another moment they would be overtaken and slain, so he threw down a reed and said :

“ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let a reed-brake spring up
So that they cannot set one foot before another ! ”

Immediately there sprang up a reed-brake, and the wicked aunt and her husband had the greatest difficulty in getting through it. But when Mīz Mast o Khumār looked behind him again, he saw they were once more close on his heels. He threw down the needle and cried :

“ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let a grove of needles spring up
So that they cannot set one foot before another ! ”

And forthwith up sprang a grove of needles. The wicked aunt and her husband had the greatest difficulty in getting over it, but when Mīz Mast o Khumār looked again, he saw they were catching up once more, so he threw down the salt and cried :

“ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let a salt-marsh spring up
So that they cannot set one foot before another ! ”

And forthwith there arose a salt-marsh. The unhappy pursuers only crossed it after a thousand hardships, with feet all bleeding and torn. But when Prince Sleepy-Head looked behind he saw that they were on his heels once again, and he threw down the sea-foam and cried :

“ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let a sea spring up ! ”

And forthwith there arose a very great sea, and in the middle of it the little piece of sea-foam floated on the top of the waves.

The wicked aunt and her husband reached the shore of the sea, and knew that they would never be able to cross it. Then the Lady Aunt began to beg and implore, saying : “ Nephew, nephew, how did you get across this sea ? Please show us so that we may come too.” And he answered : “ Both of us at once put our feet on that rock that you see in the middle of the sea, and thus we crossed over. Put your feet on the rock together, both of you, and cross too.” They did as he told them, but as soon as their feet touched what they thought was a rock, they sank down and were both drowned.

Then Prince Sleepy-Head and Eye of Grace came back in safety to their own country, and they decorated and illuminated seven cities, and celebrated their marriage.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

VII

THE STORY OF THE COLT QÉYTĀS

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a King who had one son, and the boy's mother was dead. The King married again, so the young Prince had a stepmother. He also had a colt whom they called Qéytās.

Every morning when the boy was going for his lessons to the mullā he used first to pay a visit to his colt, and at noon when he came back he used to go and have another look at him before he went in to have his lunch.

One day when he came home and went to see the colt he found him crying, and said : "What are you crying for, Qéytās?" "Your father's wife is planning how she can kill you," answered the colt ; "to-day she has cooked some *āsh* and put poison in it, and she means to give it to you to eat so that you may die." "Don't cry, I won't eat it," said the Prince.

When he went into the house, he said : "I say, I'm hungry to-day, though !" His stepmother said : "Well, we've cooked some nice *āsh* to-day, run along and take some." "I don't want *āsh*," he said, and went back to the mullā.

Next day when he went to see Qéytās he found him again in tears. "What's the matter now?" asked he. "To-day your father's wife has cooked a *pulau* and put poison in it, so that you'll eat it and die." "Not I," said the King's Son. "Well," said the colt, "be careful. When they put the dish down, watch what part of it your step-mother helps herself from, and take your own mouthful from the same place, but on no account put your hand on the side next you." The Prince ate his lunch safely, and went back to the mullā.

The following day he found the colt crying again, and once more he asked: "Why are you crying now?"—"Your father's wife has dug a well in the middle of the hall passage, and in the well she has fixed all kinds of swords and daggers and weapons of war, so that when you walk over the top you will fall in and be killed." "Don't you worry about me," said the King's Son, "I won't walk along the middle of the passage, I'll keep close to the wall."

So the boy escaped for the third time, and his step-mother was very angry, and said to herself: "There's only one thing to do. We must find some means of killing that colt." She pretended to be very ill, and went to bed and rolled herself up in the bed-clothes, and sent for the King's Chief Physician. When the doctor came, she told him: "My plan is to kill the colt, Qéytās. You must say that the only remedy for my complaint is the fat of Qéytās, and that nothing else will do any good."

In the morning when the Prince came back from the mullā he found the colt crying worse than ever: "Well, what's the matter this time?" He answered: "Up to now your father's wife has been plotting to kill you, but now she is trying to kill me, and if she does, who will there

be to warn you and save your life?" "That's bad," said the boy, "what had I better do?"—"When you go in, the Shāh, your father, will say to you: 'Give me that colt of yours, my son, and whatever you like to ask for I shall give you in exchange.' Then you must say: 'I'll give him to you with pleasure, father, on this condition, that you put all your royal robes on me and your crown on my head, and bedeck Qéytās with all the jewels and costly things in your treasury, then I shall mount him and ride him three times round the house, and when I dismount you can take the colt away and kill him.'"

When the boy got home the King said: "The doctors have prescribed the fat of Qéytās, the colt, for our invalid. Give the horse to me, and I shall give you in exchange whatever you wish." The King's Son answered just as Qéytās had told him to, and they proceeded to obey his instructions. The news came to the ears of the stepmother, and she was in great delight, and chuckled: "When once we've killed the horse it won't be hard to finish off my stepson."

Then they put all the royal robes on the young Prince and the crown on his head, and they adorned the colt with all the jewels and treasures and costly things in the King's treasury. Up sprang the King's Son, and rode Qéytās three times round the house. At the end of the third circuit the horse rose in the air and flew off, and no one in that country saw the colt or his master again.

They flew and they flew till they came to a town. There the colt alighted near a garden, and said: "Now you must put on my back the royal clothes and the crown, and I shall fly away for the present. Then find a bit of old sheepskin and pull it over your head, and put on a set of very old

clothes. Now in this garden is a castle, and the King's youngest daughter lives here. Go and knock at the garden door, and when the gardener comes to open it for you, say to him : ' I am friendless and out of work, and have no one to care for me, let me come and be your son. Give me work to do here and I'll help you.' Now pull a lock out of my mane and put it safely in your pocket, and remember whenever you want me you have only to put one of my hairs in the fire and I'll come at once." So saying, he vanished.

Everything happened just as Qéytās had said. The gardener opened the door and accepted the strange boy as his son, and there the Prince stayed and worked in the garden. One day he was feeling weary and lonely, and he put a hair in the fire. Immediately Qéytās appeared, and the Prince put on his crown and his royal robes and mounted the colt and began riding round the garden, for there was no one but himself in it. Now the King's youngest daughter was sitting in the castle, and she happened to look out. What was her surprise to see a youth as beautiful as the moon on her fourteenth night, riding round the garden on a horse ! Not with one heart, but with a hundred hearts she fell in love with him, and said to herself : " Now, what may this be ? Is he the son of a king or a peri's child, or what sort of a being can he be ? "

Scarcely had she seen him properly than he dismounted, and the horse, with all the royal trappings, vanished into the air, while the youth put on his old clothes and pulled the bit of shabby sheepskin over his head. " What does this mean ? What can it be ? " wondered the girl, and she sent to fetch the boy, and asked him : " Who are you ? " " I am the gardener's son," said he. " What's that thing

on your head for ? ”—“ I am scald-headed,” answered he. “ Nonsense,” replied the Princess, “ stop this fooling. I saw you in those royal clothes you had on, and I saw the crown you had on your head. If you will only tell me the truth of the whole story, I’ll be your wife.”

Now, not with one heart, but with a hundred hearts the Prince had fallen in love with the King’s Daughter, so he told her his whole history from the beginning. And the two were in love with each other, but no’ one knew that he was a king’s son except himself and the King’s youngest daughter.

Now the King had two other daughters, and the King’s Wazīr had two sons who were in love with the two Princesses, and the Wazīr had great hopes that the King would give them his daughters in marriage. He therefore thought out a plan, and went and talked privately to the gardener. One day the gardener came and gave three melons to his adopted son and said : “ Take these to the King,” and he did so.

When the King cut the biggest one he saw it was over-ripe, and there could be no pleasure in eating it ; when he cut the middle one, he found it was a most beautiful and delicious melon. When he cut the smallest it was still a little green. Then the Wazīr spoke (for it was according to his instructions that the gardener had sent the melons) : “ May I be the sacrifice for your Majesty’s life ! The first melon seems to me like a maiden who has remained too long in her father’s house, and the happiest moment for her marriage is already past. The second is like a maiden just in the first bloom of her marriageable age, the third is like a young girl whose day for marrying has not yet come.”

The King answered and said : “ What are you driving

at? What meaning lies behind the words you speak?"—"Sire, my meaning is this, that your two elder daughters are now grown up, and that the time for wedding them has come." "Well," said the King, "what do you think I ought to do?" "Make all your preparations for a big hunting expedition," said the Wazīr, and take all your nobles and dignitaries and big men with you to hunt. Then tell your three daughters to come too, and make ready three golden oranges, and give them into the hand of the three maidens. When all is prepared, let all these high-born people pass in front of the Princesses where they sit, and let each of the maidens smite on the head with her golden orange the man whom she is willing to accept."

The King did as the Wazīr suggested, and the two elder daughters smote with their golden oranges the two sons of the Wazīr, but the youngest daughter smote the scald-headed gardener's boy. Then the hunting-party broke up, and each one as he passed mocked the King's youngest daughter and made fun of her.

Then the King gave his two elder girls in marriage to the two sons of the Wazīr, and he gave his youngest to the gardener's son, but he became ill with grief to think that she should have made so base a choice. The doctors tried every sort of medicine and every sort of treatment, but the King got no better. At last one doctor came and said: "There is a bird in such and such a desert, and no one has yet been able to bring it down. If any one could be found to hunt and kill that bird and give it to the King to eat, he would get well."

When they heard this, the King's two sons-in-law said: "We two will go and catch this bird and bring it in." "I'll come with you," said the gardener's boy. "By the souls

of your fathers, this is nonsense !” cried they ; “ we are the sons of a Wazīr ; we may succeed in this affair or we may not, but how could a scald-head like you, who scarcely deserve the name of a human being, hope to succeed ? ”

When they saw, however, that the lad was obstinate and persisted in wanting to come with them, they spoke to the King’s stable-boys and said : “ Go into the stable and choose the very worst horse there is, and put a tattered saddle on it and bring it for him to ride.” But they chose for themselves the best horses there were, with saddle-cloths and handsome trappings, servants and retinue, and started out on their quest, while the gardener’s boy on his wretched nag came limping along behind them.



By the time they reached the middle of a big desert he was all by himself far behind. Then he threw a hair into the fire, and his horse Qéytās appeared with all his kit. The shabby old horse he had been riding he tethered to a peg out of sight, and changed his clothes, and put on the royal robes and set the crown on his head. Then he mounted Qéytās and began to gallop, and soon overtook his brothers-in-law. They were busy trying to catch the bird, but they had had no success.

As soon as they caught sight of the handsome stranger they said : “ Who are you ? And what business has brought you here ? ” “ I am the son of a king,” replied he, “ and I am travelling about. Who are you people ? And what are you doing out here ? ”

They answered : “ The King, our father-in-law, is sick, and the doctors have prescribed this bird for him, so

we have come to get it, but so far we have had no luck." He said : " If you will write a paper saying that you are my slaves and give it to me, I shall bring down the bird for you." They took counsel together and whispered : " After all, we don't know him and he doesn't know us, and if we succeed in bringing home this bird for the King we shall have done a famous deed."

So aloud they said : " We will give you the paper," and they wrote it and sealed it and gave it to the strange prince. Then he caught the bird and killed it, and took its head and feet for himself and gave them the rest. (For on the way Qéytās had told him that it was the head and the feet that were the remedy for the King's illness.) Then he put an iron rod in the fire and branded the Wazīr's sons as his slaves.

They were greatly delighted at having got the bird, and mounted their horses and rode away.

He also mounted his horse and galloped off till he came to the place where he had left his wretched lame nag. There he took off his crown and his royal robes and put them on Qéytās, who at once disappeared. Then he dressed himself again in his old clothes, and mounted the shabby old horse. When the brothers-in-law came along they saw, as they thought, the gardener's boy stuck half-way, and they began to make fun of him and to laugh at him, and leaving him there they pricked their horses and hurried on.

When they arrived home they cooked the bird carefully the very way the doctor had prescribed, and put it in a ruby bowl and put an emerald spoon with it, and brought it thus to the King. He ate it and got worse.

Soon after this the gardener's boy arrived home too. He cooked the head and feet of the bird and put them in a

wooden bowl, and put a wooden spoon with it and sent it in for the King. The King was very angry and wanted to send it away again untasted, but his wife wouldn't let him, and said: "It would be unkind to break the poor fellow's heart." So the King listened to his wife's words and took a spoonful of the soup and a tiny grain of the meat, and immediately he felt a little better. Thereupon he quickly ate up the whole of it and was completely cured.

At once he sent for his three sons-in-law, and said to the two elder: "The stuff that was my medicine you gave away to this boy, and what was bad for me you brought me yourselves!" They were amazed, and said: "But he wasn't with us at all; his old horse never got more than half-way!" Then they asked the gardener's boy all about it, and he said: "I was about half-way when a youth came up to me and gave me these things."

His two brothers-in-law were greatly vexed, and began to laugh at him. Then he turned to the King: "Hearken to my petition, though I am but a poor boy. I beg you to examine the thigh of these two and see what there is there." The King consented, and saw that they had been branded.

He turned to the gardener's boy and said: "What sort of a tale is this?" Then they told the whole truth to the King and said: "A strange youth branded us and got a declaration of slavery from us, and then he slew the bird and took its head and feet himself and gave the rest of it to us. And then it seems that half-way home he gave the head and feet to this fellow."

At that the gardener's boy put his hand into his bosom and drew out the declaration of slavery, and said: "I was the strange youth."

The King was greatly astonished, and said : " Tell us the whole truth." Then he drew the bit of old sheepskin off his head, and the King looked at him closely and saw that he was a lad of birth and breeding. Then he told the King his story from first to last, and the King was delighted and took the crown from his own head and put it on that of his youngest son-in-law. Then he sent for his youngest daughter and said : " Up till now you have been the daughter of a king, from henceforward you shall be a king's wife, and your sisters' husbands shall be your husband's slaves."

Then the King's Son sat on the royal throne and began to rule, and he set free his brothers-in-law and gave them back their declaration of slavery, and made them his Wazīrs.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

VIII

THE STORY OF NUKHUDŪ, OR MASTER PEA

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

ONE day a man came home to his house and said to his wife : “Cook me a little *āsh*, my dear, and let some one bring it down to the shop for me.” When the wife had finished cooking the *āsh*, she poured it into a bowl, and said to herself : “Oh dear, oh dear, if only I had a little son now ! He could have carried the bowl of *āsh* to his father.”

All of a sudden, while she was still speaking, a pea hopped out of the broth and said : “I am your son. Fill the bowl and I’ll carry it to the shop for my father.” So she filled the bowl, and he put it on his head and carried it off to the door of his father’s shop. The man said : “Who are you ?” Master Pea answered : “I am your son, and my name is Nukhudū.” Then his father said : “Well, if you are my son, why don’t you go and get my farthing for me from the King ?” And Master Pea said : “Right you are.”

Then he ran and he ran and started out and began to travel. He came first to the edge of a stream and found a woman washing clothes. “Come along,” cried he, “and

wash this cap for me that I have on my head." "I've no more soap," said she. "Then I'll drink up all your water," said he. As he spoke he put one foot on one bank of the stream and one foot on the other, and stooped and drank up all the water in the stream. Then he started out again and began to travel.

When he had gone a little way, a leopard suddenly sprang out in front of him and called : "Master Pea, where are you off to ?"—"I'm going to get my father's farthing from the King." "Then," said the leopard, "I'll come with you too." "No," said Nukhudū, "you'll only get tired." "Not a fear," said the leopard, "I'll come."—"All right, come and let's go ahead." They had hardly gone more than two or three steps when the leopard said : "I'm tired, Master Pea," and Nukhudū said : "Take out your teeth and hop inside," and with that he opened his mouth very wide and in jumped the leopard.

When he had gone on another few yards, a wolf popped out in front of him and cried : "Where are you off to, Master Pea ?" and he said : "I'm going to fetch my father's farthing from the King." "Then," said the wolf, "I'll come with you too."—"No, you'll only get tired." "Not a fear," said the wolf, "I'll come."—"All right, come and let's get on." But they had hardly gone more than two or three steps when the wolf said : "I'm tired, Master Pea." "Take out your teeth and hop inside," said Nukhudū, and with that he opened his mouth very wide and in jumped the wolf.

When he had gone on another few yards, there appeared a jackal in front of him and cried : "Where are you off to, Master Pea ?" And he said : "I'm going to get my father's farthing from the King." "Then," said the jackal,

“I’ll come too.”—“No, you’ll only get tired.” “Not a fear,” said the jackal, “I’ll come.”—“All right, come and let’s get on.” But hardly had they gone more than two or three steps when the jackal said: “I’m tired, Master Pea.” “Take out your teeth and hop inside,” said Nukhudū, and with that he opened his mouth very wide and in jumped the jackal.

Then he went on till he came to the King’s court, and he called out: “I’ve come and I want my father’s farthing from you.” “Oh ho,” said the King, “what tomfoolery are you up to, you son of a burnt father! What way is this to address a king?” and he turned to his courtiers and retainers and said: “Here, take him away and throw him to-night to my fighting-cocks that they may pick him to bits.”

So they carried off Master Pea and threw him to the fighting-cocks. As soon as he was left alone, Nukhudū opened his mouth and called to the jackal and said: “Come along and strangle these cocks for me.” Out sprang the jackal and strangled all the cocks, and went off to his own home. When the King’s messengers came in the morning they saw that all the cocks were dead, and there was Master Pea alive and kicking.

They brought the news to the King, and he said: “Take him to the stables and throw him to the wild horses.” So they carried him off and turned him loose in the stable of the wild horses. Then Master Pea called to the wolf and said: “Come along out and eat up the horses.” And out sprang the wolf and ate up all the horses, and went back to his own home. When the King’s servants came in the morning they saw that all the horses were torn into little bits, and Master Pea was sitting there safe and sound.

When they brought the news to the King, he said:

“Take him away and throw him into the garden of my wild beasts.” As soon as he was left alone there, Master Pea called out to the leopard : “Come along out and tear all these wild beasts to pieces for me.” And out sprang the leopard and tore all the wild beasts to pieces, and went back to his own home.

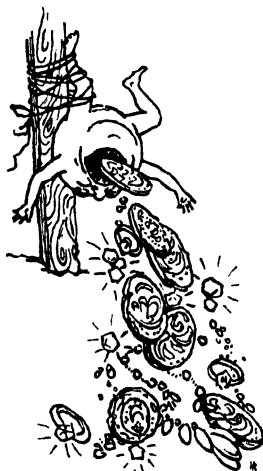
In the morning when the King’s servants came they saw that all the wild beasts had been torn to pieces, and Master Pea was sitting there well and happy. They brought this news also to the King, and he was very wroth and said : “Go and fill a room full of straw and set fire to it, and throw him into it so that he may be suffocated by the smoke.” They did as the King said, but when Nukhudū was left alone he squirted out all the water that he had drunk up out of the stream and put out the fire, and then sat down on the floor and went to sleep. In the morning they brought the news to the King : “Master Pea is still alive.”

Now the King had a wazīr who was very wise, so he sent for him and said : “What shall we do about this ?” “It doesn’t look as if we’d ever get the better of him,” said the Wazīr. “I think perhaps the best thing would be to send him to the Treasury and let him find his father’s farthing and be gone.” So the King gave the order, and they took Master Pea to the Treasury and said : “Come along, go in and take your father’s farthing, and then be off with you.” As soon as Nukhudū found himself alone he opened his mouth and popped in all the money and jewels and precious stones and costly things in the King’s Treasury, then he took one little piece of money in his fingers and came out saying : “See, I’ve taken my father’s farthing and I’m gone !”



STORY OF NUKHUDŪ, OR MASTER PEA 47

Then he went back to his father's shop and said : " Look, I've brought back your farthing from the King," and he gave the piece of money to his father. Then he went on home to his mother and said : " Mummy, dear, cook me some nice broth and give it to me to eat, and then please hang me up upside down and beat me with a little stick." So his mother cooked the broth for him, and when he had eaten it she tied him upside down to the leg of her spinning-wheel and beat him ever so gently with a little stick, and out poured all the King's gold and silver and jewels and precious stones. So they became very rich, and sat down to live their lives together, the father, the mother, and Master Pea.



And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

IX

THE STORY OF MUSHKIL GUSHĀ¹

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a poor man who was a Thorn-cutter, and in his household there were just himself and his wife and one daughter. Every day he went out into the desert to gather thorn bushes for firewood, and every evening he used to bring in his load of thorns and sell it, and thus provide a means of livelihood. One day when he came home his daughter said : "Daddy, I want some *chaimāl* to-night." "Very well, my dear," said he, "when I sell my load to-day I'll buy the dates and the sugar and the ghee, and we'll knead the cakes this evening and you shall have your wish."

¹ Poor and pious women in Persia have the custom of telling the story of Mushkil Gushā on the Eve of a Friday, and in this wise : they fast all Thursday (viz. from sunset on our Wednesday till sunset on our Thursday), and at noon they find a child who has never heard the tale and tell the story to him (or her). If no child is available they put a mirror on the ground and tell the story to the face in the looking-glass. Then when the time of sunset prayer has come they break their fast with pease and raisins or with dates. Whatever is left over from the "break-fast" they distribute as alms in the name of Mushkil Gushā. No one to whom such alms is offered should refuse to accept them, but he may hand them on to some one else.

The story as it follows above was taken down *verbatim* from the lips of one of these poor and pious women by my informant. It is believed that whoever follows these instructions will find all his desires fulfilled. It is open to the reader to put this faith to the test.

That day as usual the poor old man went out on his thorn-gathering. When evening came and he got back to his own house, he found the door tight shut, and hungry and thirsty as he was, he put down the load of thorns by the door and slept beside it. In the morning he woke up early and said to himself: "See, now, it will be best to go off quickly and gather another load of thorns and bring it. That will make two, and I'll be back early and sell them all the sooner this afternoon, and my daughter shall have her wish."

The poor Thorn-cutter set out and worked hard and gathered his load and hurried home, but when he got back the door was tight shut. He cried a little, and hungry and thirsty as he was, he lay down beside his two loads and slept till morning. He woke up very, very hungry, and said: "It is now two days since any of us have had anything to eat. I'll go off early again to-day and gather thorns. That will make three loads. Then I'll hurry back and sell all three and satisfy my daughter's wish."

In short, he went once more and again brought his load of thorns, and came—only to find again the door tight shut. He cried a little, and lay down hungrier and thirstier than ever beside his three loads to sleep. Whether he went to sleep or whether he fainted from weakness, he saw some one who said: "Ho, old man! Hulloo, Thorn-cutter!"—"What do you want?" said he. "Look, far out there in the desert they are distributing bread and *pulau* as alms!" Up rose the poor old man and walked and walked, but far as he went he saw neither bread nor *pulau*. When he got back he found that some one or something had set fire to his three loads of thorns, and they were all burnt up. He cried a little and lay down and slept.

No sooner had he dropped off to sleep than he again saw some one who called out : " Ho, old man ! Hullo, old man ! What's the matter with you ? " " For three days," replied he, " I have toiled collecting three loads of thorns to buy a little food for my household. Just now I fell asleep and heard some one cry : ' Ho, old man, rise up, they are distributing bread and *pulau* out there in the desert.' I went out and found nothing, and when I got back, lo, they had set fire to all my three loads. And I and my wife and my daughter have now fasted three days."

" Good," answered the man ; " now rise up, old man, and say seven prayers, and shut your eyes and mount my horse behind me." Quickly the poor old man said the seven prayers and shut his eyes, and the stranger took him up on his horse and carried him off. They reached a desert : " Say three prayers and dismount," said the stranger. He said three prayers and dismounted. " Now gather as many of these pebbles as ever you want ! " said the horseman. The poor old man thought to himself : " God help me, what do I want pebbles for ! What am I to do with them ? " Then he thought : " Ah well, there's the proverb : ' Better bring home a stone than bring home disgrace.' " And he began to gather pebbles.

He filled his sack and his pockets and the skirts of his coat and the shawl round his waist, everything he could, full of the pebbles. Then the stranger said : " Say three prayers and mount again behind me." He said three prayers and mounted, and the horse carried them back to the door of the house. When they got there the stranger said : " Old man, say three prayers and get down."

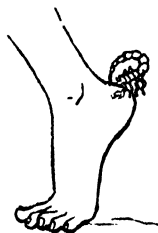
When he had said the prayers and dismounted the horseman said : " Old man, take these pebbles and fulfil

your daughter's wish, and never forget Mushkil Gushā, the Remover of Difficulties. Every Friday Eve tell the tale of Mushkil Gushā and keep the fast of Mushkil Gushā, and distribute as alms the dates of Mushkil Gushā, and never let Mushkil Gushā be forgotten." Thereupon the horseman vanished.

The old man began to knock on the door, and his wife and daughter woke up and said : " Where on earth have you been the last two or three days ? " He told them the whole story, and went and emptied out the pebbles in a corner of the room, and they all lay down to sleep.

Now a scorpion stung one of their neighbours' children, and when they got up they saw the light of a bright fire or lamp coming from the Thorn-cutter's house. They came to the edge of the roof and called out : " Neighbour, you have a fire burning, give us a light, one of the children has been stung by a scorpion." The Thorn-cutter made oath and said : " God is my witness, I have no fire." " Well, then," they answered, " you've got a lamp alight." Then the Thorn-cutter's wife got up and saw that the neighbours were right : the pebbles were shining brightly and flashing like lightning, and from them light was streaming out through the hole in the roof. She ran up on to the roof and covered the hole, and called out : " God is our witness, neighbours, we have no light. It must have been a circle of moonlight that you saw." They were greatly disappointed and went back into their own house to make a fire for themselves.

Then the woman came and said to her husband : " Those pebbles we emptied out are bright and sparkling, and have lighted up the room like moonlight." " All right," said



he, "take whatever sacks, bags, carpets, and cloths you can find and cover them up till morning."

When day came and they got up, they found that the pebbles were all most beautiful and wonderful precious stones. The Thorn-cutter said: "Well, wife, these are the gift of God. Get on your things and take one of these to the bāzār and sell it." So she put on her outdoor trousers, her mantle and veil, and took one of the stones to the goldsmith's shop.

"What would you buy this for?" she asked. "Well, would you let me have it for ten tumāns?" asked the goldsmith. "Brother, don't make a fool of me!" said the poor woman, who never in her life had had so much as ten qṛāns at a time. "Well, well, say twenty?" said the man. "Don't make fun of me," said she. So it went on to thirty and forty and at last a hundred tumāns. "Will you sell it for a hundred tumāns?" "Brother, I have prayed you not to make a fool of me; give me what it is worth and let me go." Then the jeweller took the stone and counted out a hundred tumāns to her.

As soon as she had realised that all this money was hers she went and bought food of all sorts, not forgetting everything the daughter wanted for the date-cakes, and she took it all home. Then she came back again and bought all sorts of clothes and fine things in the bāzār for her husband, her daughter, and herself. And, lastly, she bought a fine house, for they were very rich.

One day, some time after this, the daughter went up on the roof and saw a castle just opposite their house, which looked so wonderful that you would faint merely at the sight. She came down and began to plague and pester her father: "Daddy, I want a castle just like the one our

neighbours opposite have got." "What nonsense you are talking, child!" said he; "that castle belongs to the King's Daughter, and you are the daughter of a thorn-cutter. How could you expect to have a castle as splendid as if you were the daughter of a king?" To this the daughter obstinately answered: "The same God Who gave wealth and riches to the King's Daughter has given also to me, and I want a castle as fine as hers."

So when the poor father saw that he hadn't the strength of mind to resist her, he gave in and began to build, and presently the castle was finished all but the roof, and they put on the roof and completed it.

One day the King's Daughter came to her castle, and looked and saw that some one had built another castle opposite hers, and just as handsome. She called all her servants and retainers and *farrāshes*, and asked: "Who is it who has built this castle opposite mine?" They brought word: "A thorn-gatherer has built it for his daughter."

Then the Princess sent for the Thorn-cutter and said: "What right had you to build a fine castle like this just in front of mine? Why did you do it?" He hung his head and said: "May I be the sacrifice for your life, your Highness! God, who gave wealth and riches to the King, gave also to me, the Thorn-cutter, and I have only this one daughter. She begged and implored me to build her this castle, and I fulfilled her wish." "Well," said the King's Daughter, "now send your daughter to me."

The Thorn-cutter's Daughter came in with great pomp and ceremony, and the Princess noticed that the charm the girl was wearing round her neck had a large carbuncle in it and her amulet was set with a beautiful pair of carbuncles.

The two girls made friends, and sat the whole day together chatting, and made a plan to meet on the morrow and go for an excursion together. Next day the Thorn-gatherer's Daughter mounted her horse and the King's Daughter hers, and they went off to spend the day in a garden of the King's.

There they ate lunch together, and as there was a small lake they both undressed to have a bathe. The King's Daughter took off her necklace and hung it for safety in the fork of a tree, and they both went and played about in the lake. They played and splashed and enjoyed themselves till the afternoon, then they put on their clothes again and went home. At the cross-roads they said : " Good-bye, God be your keeper ! " and each went to her own castle.

The next day came and the next, and suddenly the Princess wanted her necklace and found it wasn't there. She sent to the Thorn-cutter's Daughter to say : " You stole my necklace." The girl vowed solemnly : " I did not steal it, I never saw it." " That sort of talk is of no use," said the King's Daughter, and she sent and they cast the Thorn-gatherer into prison, and they seized his house and his castle, his goods and everything that he had.

Now it happened one fine day that it was Friday Eve. The poor Thorn-cutter was sitting miserably in prison with his feet in the stocks, when he remembered and said to himself : " O thou forgetful and ungrateful one ! See, now, the horseman said : ' Every Friday Eve tell the tale of Mushkil Gushā, and keep the fast of Mushkil Gushā, and distribute as alms the dates of Mushkil Gushā,' and I, ungrateful, I did none of these things ! "

And there beside the stocks which were fastened round his ankles he saw a tiny rusty copper coin. At that moment

a horseman happened to be coming along ; the Thorn-cutter called out to him and said : “ Father, come and take this coin, and go buy pease and raisins, and come back and I’ll tell you the story of Mushkil Gushā, the Remover of Difficulties, and we will eat the raisins and pease together.” “ Get out of that, you son of an evil mother !” exclaimed the stranger ; “ am I to get down from my horse, forsooth, and take a rusty coin from you and go buy pease and raisins for you, and come and sit at your feet while you tell me the story of Mushkil Gushā? A pretty piece of insolence ! You must be a wonderful fool !” “ All right, Father,” the Thorn-gatherer answered, “ God break your bones and your horse’s bones !” On rode the stranger, but he had only gone a few paces when his horse fell and broke its leg and he broke his arm. And now we are done with him.



Now there was a poor old man whose only child was lying at the point of death, and he had come to the bāzār to buy a shroud for the boy and take it home, so that the lad could die in peace. Just as he came past the prison the Thorn-cutter called him and said : “ Come and take this rusty coin, and go for me to the bāzār and buy pease and raisins, and come back and I’ll tell you the tale of Mushkil Gushā and we’ll eat them together.” The poor father thought for a moment and said to himself : “ After all, if the child is dead, he’s dead, and if not, I may as well satisfy this poor fellow for an hour.” So he came and took the coin, and went and fetched the pease and raisins and returned

and sat down beside the Thorn-gatherer, who told him the whole story of Mushkil Gushā, and they ate the pease and raisins together.

Then the old man stood up and said : “ Now I must go home to my house and see whether my child is alive or dead.” When he came to his own door he stopped to listen, and heard the sound of a child’s voice. He went in and found his boy walking about alive and well, and he said to the mother : “ How has this happened ? ” “ I don’t know,” said she ; “ some little time after you had gone he began to improve, and little by little he was able to speak, and he got well and now he is running about as you see.”

Now hear about the King’s Daughter. One day her slave-woman went to fetch water from that garden of the King’s. As she drew near the lake she saw the necklace of her mistress in the water. She put out her hand again and again, but could not reach it, though she could see it all the time. Then God, who is the God of the whole world, willed that she should sneeze. She lifted up her eyes as she sneezed, and there she saw the necklace hanging in the very fork of the tree where the Princess herself had thrown it.

She threw down her water-pots, and ran as fast as ever she could to her mistress and said : “ See, Lady, in vain have you thrown the poor Thorn-cutter and his daughter into prison ! Your necklace is hanging in the very fork of the tree where you must have put it yourself.”

Then the King’s Daughter sent her own old white-haired nurse and said : “ Go to the garden and see if the slave-woman speaks true.” They went and looked and saw—there was the necklace hanging in the tree ! And they brought it back to their mistress.

Then she sent speedily and took the Thorn-gatherer

out of prison, and gave him back his house and his castle,
his goods and all that he had had.

May God who granted the Thorn-cutter's desire
Grant also the desires of all mankind !

HAIL, MUSHKIL GUSHĀ !

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

X

THE STORY OF THE JEALOUS SISTERS

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a father who had three daughters, and his wife who was their mother was dead. Every day he used to go off to work at his trade, and every evening he came home. One night on his return he said : “ Girls, some evening you might make a little *sherbatū* for me. You can eat some yourselves, and put a little aside so that I can have it in the morning to dip my bread into at breakfast-time.” The daughters took sugar, flour, butter, and spices and made the *sherbatū* and ate their own share, putting the rest into a bowl, which they placed on one side for their father’s breakfast. In the middle of the night, when he was asleep, the two elder sisters got up and ate up the whole bowlful of *sherbatū*, and filled the bowl with dirt and rubbish and put it back in its place. In the morning when the father woke up and found what the daughters had done, he was very angry and wished them ill, but he said nothing about it.

A little later in the day he said : “ Come, children, let’s go for an excursion to-day.” So they took some bread and a skin of water for their picnic, and went far, far out into the

desert. After some time they came to the ruins of an old house. "Come here and sit down and rest a little," said the father. "I'll just go and wash my hands and be back presently." He went out and hung the skin of water up behind the wall, and made a hole in it and went off about his own business.

The daughters waited and waited, but there was no sign of his coming back. However, as long as they heard the water splashing out of the skin they thought he was washing his hands and didn't worry about him. But at last, when the skin ran dry, the splashing stopped, and they began to get frightened and called out: "Father Splash-splash, when are you coming back? Why aren't you coming, Father Splash-splash?" But no answer came, and when they ran out they saw that their father wasn't there nor any one else.

The three sisters took each other's hands and wandered out into the desert. Now it happened that the King's Son was out hunting, and he chanced to pass that way and saw the three maidens wandering about hand in hand, apparently lost in the desert. "Who are you?" asked he. "We are the daughters of Father Splash-splash," they replied.

Thereupon he turned to his servants and said: "Put these maidens on horseback and let us take them home." So he took them home, and he saw that the youngest was the fairest of them all. He married her, therefore, and said to the two elder ones: "You will stay here and serve your sister. Attend properly to your work and don't go off anywhere else."

So he took the youngest sister to wife, but the others were very jealous, and were always on the look-out to do her an injury. Now after some time the young wife was ill and in bed, and the evil sisters went and found the nurse who

was attending her and said : “ We will give you anything you like if you will find a pair of puppy dogs and bring them to us. But don’t say a word about it to any one.”

When they got the two puppies they hid them safely for the moment. After a time two lovely children were born to the youngest sister—a son with a tuft of golden hair and a daughter with a face as beautiful as the moon. Then the wicked sisters stole away the beautiful babies and put the two puppy dogs in their place, and the babies they put in a box and fastened down the lid and threw it into the water.

When the news was brought to the King’s Son that instead of a baby two puppy dogs had been born to him, he gave orders : “ Take this woman to the cross-roads and build her up into a lime pillar, and let every one who passes by throw a stone at her.”

Now a certain fuller went down that day to a stream of water to do his fulling, and he saw the water bringing down a box. He drew it in and lifted the lid, and found inside a moon-faced baby girl and a golden-tufted baby boy. He took them out and went and got hold of a foster-mother for them, and brought them up, and by and by, when they were big enough, he sent them both to a mullā to learn to read and write.

Each morning as they went to the mullā they used to notice that every one who passed the cross-roads took up a stone and threw it at the woman in the pillar. One day as they came out they picked a rose-leaf and threw it at the woman instead of a stone. When the two little children hit her with the rose-leaves she started crying so bitterly that a crowd collected round her. “ Why is this ? ” they asked. “ When people throw stones at you, you make no sound, but when these two children throw rose-leaves you

begin to cry !” “ Ah,” said she, “ from other people I expect no kindness, but these are my own two babies,” for her mother’s love made her recognise her own children.

The news was brought to the King’s Son that such and such a strange thing had happened to the fuller’s children. He sent for the good man and said : “ Where did your two children come from ? ” “ On such and such a day,” said he, “ in such and such a month, in a certain year, I was working at my fulling beside the stream there, and I saw the water bringing a box down towards me. I pulled it in to me, opened it, and found inside two lovely babies, so I got a foster-mother for them, and have brought them up until this day. And as soon as they were big enough I sent them to the mullā, and now this has happened.”

The King’s Son said : “ Go and fetch the nurse who was with my wife.” They brought in the nurse. “ What children were born to me and my wife ? ” asked the Prince, “ If you tell the truth I shall give you a reward, and if you tell a lie I shall cut off your head.” “ May it please your Highness,” said she, “ there was born a baby-boy with a golden tuft and a baby-girl with a moon-face. But your wife’s two sisters came and put the babies into a box and threw it into the water, and they put a pair of puppies in the babies’ place and said the puppy-dogs were hers.”

Thereupon the Prince sent for the wicked sisters. When they came he asked : “ What is the proper punishment for a woman who does evil ? ” Now they thought he was still angry with their sister and wanted to punish her further, and they said : “ You should take two vicious dogs and put one into each leg of her trousers, and tie her to the tail of a wild horse and drive it out into the desert.” Then the King’s Son sent for four vicious dogs and did to the wicked

sisters even as they had said, and mounted one of them on a wild horse and tied the second to the tail of a wild horse, and drove them out into the desert and said :

“ Evil overtake the evildoer ! ”

Then he sent and bade them release his wife from the pillar of lime, and take her to the baths and then bring her back in honour to his house, and she became his wife and he became her husband. And he took the children back from the fuller, and they all sat down to live their lives together.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XI

THE STORY OF THE PRINCE AND THE PERI

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE were two brothers who were both kings ; the one had three daughters and the other had one son, so they betrothed the eldest daughter to her uncle's son.

The cousins were duly married and the Prince carried the bride to his home, but after that he took absolutely no notice of her ; he spoke no word to her, good or bad, neither " yea " nor " nay." For some six months the bride waited patiently, but at last, when she saw that her husband paid no heed to her at all and wouldn't even open his lips, she went to her father and made request : " Father, how long must I be patient ? It is now six months, and my husband has not once spoken to me ; it is evident that he does not want me. I beg you procure me a divorce." So the King was obliged to get a divorce for his first daughter.

Some little time after this they betrothed the second Princess to her cousin, and he married her and took her home. But she also found that he said neither " yea " nor " nay," in short, he neglected her just as he had her elder sister. She waited patiently for the space of some six months, but

when she saw that her husband would not speak at all, good or bad, day or night, she also came and made request to her father : “ Father, I am become as my sister. The son of my uncle pays no heed to me ; clearly he does not want me. I pray you procure me a divorce.” The King had no choice but to obtain a divorce for her also, and he took her home again and seated her beside her elder sister.

Well, some little time passed and the King said to himself : “ Perhaps he would like my little daughter,” so he came and betrothed his youngest daughter to his brother’s son. The marriage took place, and when the bride was taken to her husband’s house, alas and alack ! she was treated just as her two elder sisters had been. She sat still, however, and waited, and said nothing to her father or her sisters.

When her sisters came to see her now and again, or when she went back to visit them in her father’s house, she would say : “ No, sisters, it’s not in the least as you imagine. I am very fortunate, for my husband is fond of me and treats me well.” One day her sisters were coming to spend the day with her, and she said beforehand to her slave-woman : “ While my sisters are here you must come in once every hour or so and call me out, saying : ‘ The son of your uncle the Shāh is asking for you.’ ”

The slave-woman did as she was told, and every hour or so kept coming in and calling her mistress. Then the bride would get up and apologise to her sisters, and go into a neighbouring room. There she would talk to herself and laugh aloud, and say : “ O £cousin, you mustn’t keep me too long ; my sisters have come to see me, let me go back to them soon, for they are alone.” The unfortunate elder sisters became annoyed at last and said : “ Look at this !

STORY OF THE PRINCE AND THE PERĪ 65

Our cousin had no desire for us, but he is so fond of our little sister that he cannot be content without her for one hour."

In the afternoon the poor Princesses went back to their home and cried a little and said to the Shāh, their father : "Do you see, father, that's how it was ! The Prince our cousin had no desire for us, but all the while he wanted our little sister."

That evening the husband came home and behaved just as usual, saying neither "yea " nor "nay," and he went off and slept in a corner by himself. And his poor wife went and slept by herself. At last six months had passed, and she still had patience and still her husband continued as before, saying nothing either good or bad by night or day.

At the end of this time it happened that the Prince came home one evening carrying a lime in his hand. He put it down beside the candlestick and went off and lay down to sleep. Next morning the wife took the lime and went out into the garden, and sat down beside a little stream. As she sat there thinking, she started absent-mindedly playing with the fruit. Suddenly it slipped from her hand and the water carried it off. She was greatly frightened and ran after it, but the stream swept it off through a hole in the garden wall into the next garden.

There was nothing for her to do but to creep through after it, and when she did so she found herself in a very large garden on the other side of the wall, and there she began to stroll about to see what it was like. When she reached the far end she found a very big and beautiful building. She went in and saw her husband asleep there beside a lovely Perī, so beautiful that merely to gaze on her would be a sin.

The wife went up to the place where they were sleeping and sprinkled water on the floor and swept it all nicely up. Then she got the samovar ready and lit it, and washed up the saucers and tea-glasses, and did everything she could think of for them until it was nearly time for them to wake up. Then she put down the lime where they could not help seeing it, and crept back through the water-hole to her own house.

When the King's Son and the daughter of the Shāh of the Perīs woke and got up from their couch, they saw that some one had watered and swept the floor, and washed up the tea things and lit the samovar, and the whole house was beautifully neat and tidy. The Prince looked and noticed the lime which he had carried home the night before, and the Perī's daughter recognised that it was the very same that she had given him yesterday as a gift. They looked at each other in silence a while. At last the Perī said : " O, What's-your-Name, it is now all over between me and thee ! " And the King's Son made no reply.

That was one day. Again the King's Son took home the lime and put it down beside the same candlestick, and went off and lay down to sleep. Next morning the wife took the fruit, and went and sat on the bank of the stream. Then she threw it into the water and went after it herself. Just as before, she found the two asleep, and she happened to notice that a circle of sunlight was falling on their faces from the round hole in the roof above, so she went up on to the roof and arranged her kerchief as a screen for them. Then, as before, she did all the work in the house, and left everything neat and tidy and ready for their tea. When all this was done she went off home, forgetting all about her kerchief. As soon as she got home she remembered it,

and went back to fetch it. This time she found they were awake and were talking together, and the Perī's daughter was saying : " O, What's-your-Name, it is now all over between thee and me."

The third day came. Again she crept through the water-hole into the garden, and did all the housework as before. Suddenly the sleepers woke, and she stole into a corner and hid herself and listened. She heard the Perī's daughter say : " O, What's-your-Name, it is now all over between thee and me. We can no longer meet here ; we shall have to go every night to the Nastaran garden. You must mount a red horse and wear a red suit, and I shall ride a white horse and put on a man's white suit, and we can meet at the cross-roads and ride from there together to the garden."

Now the wife had heard all these words, and she came home. Next morning she sent to her father's stable and said : " Bring me a yellow horse," then she put on a yellow suit of men's clothes and mounted and rode off. When she reached the cross-roads she found, as she expected, that the other two were just riding up. They all met and said : " Peace be upon you !" and " On you be peace."

Then she asked : " Where are you two riding to ? " " We were thinking of going to the Nastaran garden," said they, " may we invite you to come too ? " " Thank you very much," she replied, " I'll come with pleasure." So they all rode off together and came to the Nastaran garden. After they had been sitting there some time fruit was brought, and they began peeling melons. The young wife cut her thumb on purpose, so that it began to bleed very hard, till at last she said : " Look, now, what am I to do ? It won't stop bleeding." At once the Prince

her cousin tore a strip off the end of his waist-shawl, and with his own hands bound it tightly over the cut.

They stayed there till the afternoon, then they came out of the garden, mounted their horses, and rode home. At the cross-roads they said : “ Good-bye, God be your Keeper ! ” and separated, and the King’s Son and the Perī’s daughter said “ Good-bye ” to each other also and parted.

The wife galloped her horse more swiftly and reached home first. She gave her horse to a slave and said : “ Take him to the stable and tie him up.” Then she took off her man’s clothes and put on her own again, and sat down to wait till evening. At night the son of the Shāh her uncle came back, but this time he behaved just the same as on all the other nights, and said neither “ yea ” nor “ nay.”

Then the wife came and sat down beside the candlestick and began to tell her sorrows. All her woes from the beginning she told to the candle and the candlestick—where she had gone to, where she had been, and what she had done :

“ Ah ! I have cut my thumb so small,
And bound it with my true love’s shawl.
Hark, candlestick, I’ll tell to you,
And, candle, you must listen too.”

Her uncle’s son heard all the secrets of her heart till she had finished the tale of all her woes and had ceased to speak. Then he went away and thought to himself : “ Alas, forgetful and ungrateful heart ! For three days my cousin has come and toiled for us, and to-day she was in the garden with us.” Then he came up and threw his arms round her neck and kissed her and caressed her, and said : “ O, cousin, I loved all three daughters of the Shāh

STORY OF THE PRINCE AND THE PERI 69

my uncle, but the two first would not wait long enough. You have waited in patience and have broken the spell. You are mine."

Then they sat down to spend their lives together as husband and wife.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XII

THE STORY OF THE IDIOT BOY WHO BECAME KING

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
GOD.

THERE was a mother who had three sons, one of whom was an idiot, but the other two were quite clever and had become merchants.

One day the mother fell ill, and her sons came and sat with her and brought her medicine, food, doctors—everything that they thought would be good for her. Some days passed, and they saw that she wasn't going to get better, and meantime their shop and establishment were being neglected, so they made the idiot lad come and sit in the house, and said : “ Sit here beside our mother and drive the flies off her face, so that they may not bother her. We're just going off to have a look at the shop and we'll be back presently.”

So the Idiot sat down beside his mother and fanned off the flies. But however much he drove them off he saw that they always came back again. “ I hit you,” cried he, “ and I hit you, and yet you keep coming back. I'll burn your fathers ! ” He waited a few moments till all the flies

had collected on his mother's face, then he picked up a stone and banged it down with all his might to kill them. When the stone hit her, the poor mother died and her mouth fell open.

Presently the Idiot saw his brothers coming home, and ran out to meet them, saying : " See how I've burnt the flies' fathers ! And mother is laughing over it." When they came in and looked they saw that their mother was dead. They carried her off and buried her, and returned home.

No sooner had they got back than the Idiot began : " Now that mother is dead, come and let us divide the inheritance," but they protested : " It's too soon yet. Let us wait till the three weeks are up and we have kept the *haftum*, then it will be time enough to divide the inheritance." But the Idiot insisted : " No, I want my share at once," till at last they said : " All right. Since he comes and clamours for his share, let's divide it now."

Then they began in this wise : " The house belongs to us, but you can have the door ; the furniture belongs to us, but you can have our mother's spinning-wheel ; such and such a property is ours, but you can have the cow and her calf ; all the chattels and implements on the property are ours, but you can have the spade and pick ; such and such a flock is ours, but you can have fifteen sheep ; something else or other is ours, but you can have the stone off the foot of the spinning-wheel." " Very well," said the Idiot.

When the three weeks were up they were going to hold their mother's *haftum*, and they said to the idiot brother : " Come, let's buy your calf, and we shall kill it and cook it with rice and green pulse, and give it to our kinsfolk to

eat." So they bought the calf for seven qṛāns, and they cooked the pulse and the rice over the fire, and poured them out on to the large round serving-trays to cool. Then when all was ready they said to the Idiot: "Go round to our kinsmen's houses and invite them all to come and eat with us and accompany us afterwards to the graveyard." The Idiot went round to all the houses, but said everywhere: "Come and eat with us, but whoever comes will have to pay me the seven qṛāns for my calf!"

The brothers waited and waited, but none of the guests seemed to be coming; then the Idiot said: "I went round and told them all to come, and I said that whoever came would have to pay me my seven qṛāns." "Alas, why did you talk like that," said they; "of course no one will come. Sit you down here and we shall go round and invite them ourselves." They seated him there in charge of the feast and went off themselves.

As he was waiting there, a dog came in at the door and began to eat off one of the trays. "Didn't you hear me say," cried he, "that whoever came to eat was to pay me my seven qṛāns?" But the dog paid no heed. Then he got up and shut the door, and seized the wooden poker and dashed round after the dog. The dog got behind the door and started to bark loudly, and the Idiot hit out at him with the poker. It missed the dog, but caught the top of the door-frame. The lintel fell in, and a large pot full of golden coins fell to the floor.

The dog bolted off at a run through the broken doorway, and the Idiot, catching up the pot of money, posted after him, shouting: "Come back out of that! Don't throw your pot of money at my head; I only want my seven qṛāns. Give me that and take away the rest."

The brothers coming back met him as he ran, and called out: "Hullo, that pot of money is ours; where are you carrying it off to, idiot? How can a dog have money?" So they all turned back, and the elder brothers took the gold safely into the house. Then the guests began to arrive, and they ate together and went to the graveyard, and after that they separated to their homes.

Now every day when morning came the Idiot used to drive off his cow and his sheep far out into the desert to graze. One day, when afternoon had come and he was about to go home, he saw a lizard standing at the mouth of its hole. "Have you come," he asked, "to buy my cow?" The lizard nodded his head. "Are you asking what I want for it?" continued the Idiot. "I only want fifteen qṛāns." Again the lizard nodded his head.

"Ah, you're saying that I'm to come back after fifteen days to get my money, is that it?" And the lizard nodded his head. Then the boy grew very angry and said: "No matter what I say he nods his head," and with that he took a great stone and dashed it down with all his might, but the lizard quietly slipped into his hole.

Then the Idiot took his cow's head-ropes and fastened it at the door of the hole and called out: "All right, here's the cow. I'll come back in fifteen days and fetch my money." That evening wild beasts came and tore the cow to pieces and ate it.

When the fifteen days were up, the Idiot came back for his money, and when he arrived at the place he found the lizard sitting on a stone. "I've come for the price of my cow," said he, but the lizard only nodded its head as before. "Oh ho!" he cried, "you've spent all my money, have you? And now you're making fun of me!" So again

he took up a big stone and smote at the lizard, but again it escaped into its hole.

"Then I'll pull down your house till you give me my fifteen qrāns," and with that he struck the ground with his pick. As he struck, the ground crumbled away and showed a great hole. He went down into the hole and saw a door which opened of itself, and lo, there were seven jars of Chosroes standing in a row, and all of them were full of jewels and precious stones. And each jar had six golden bricks over its mouth, and on top of all was a golden cock.

"Don't waste time showing me all the treasures of your house!" said the Idiot, "I'll just take my fifteen qrāns, if I may, and go home." So he took fifteen qrāns for himself, and went home and told his brothers all about it and what he had done. "Well," said they, "let's go and see where ~~this~~ house is that you saw." They went with him and reconnoitred the place carefully, and stole out quietly one night with animals and loading-sacks and carried off the treasure.

Another day the Idiot took his sheep out as usual. In the afternoon when he was coming home he saw his own shadow behind him, and thought it was a strange man following him. "Are you following me to get my sheep?" he asked. The shadow answered nothing, but continued to follow. "Well, is it sheep you want?" Receiving still no answer, he let the sheep linger behind one by one, and when he reached the door of the house he let go all that remained.

So now he had nothing of the inheritance left at all except the house-door, his mother's spinning-wheel with its stone, and his pick and spade. All these things he loaded up on his back and set out on a journey. He reached the

top of a hill and sat down there to wait for night. Below the hill there was a stream of water and a tree.

A traveller happened to come along who had a pair of saddle-bags full of money which he was carrying somewhere. He came up and tied his horse to the tree, put the saddle-bags on the ground, and took out a covered pot of *chaimāl* for his supper. As he was alone in the middle of the desert he was frightened, and to distract his mind he began to mould his *chaimāl* into little figures like men. And to each he gave a name—one he called God and one Satan, one Gabriel and one the Prophet, one Ali, and so on. Then he arranged them in a row, and to get an excuse for eating them he attributed some fault to each in turn, and took it up and ate it.

The Idiot saw all this from where he was sitting up above, and threw down the big stone of his mother's spinning-wheel, crying : " Keep some of that for me ! " The traveller heard the voice, but was still wondering where it came from when the Idiot with a whizz let fly his pick, and again called out : " Keep some for me ! " Seeing no one, the poor man was greatly frightened but made no reply, so the Idiot hurled down the spade and the spinning-wheel, and lastly the house-door.

The unfortunate traveller was terrified, and jumped up, crying : " Alas and alack, what sort of a place is this desert ! How can I escape with my life ? " And leaving everything behind, he pulled up tight the heels of his *gīwas* and fled at full speed.

The Idiot thereupon came down from the hill and found that only one of the little figures remained uneaten, the one whom the traveller had called " God." So he exclaimed : " O God, I arrived just in time to save your

life ! If I hadn't come he would have devoured you too." Then he loaded up the saddle-bags again, untied the horse, mounted, and rode home. When he got back his brothers opened the door for him, and took everything and kept it. So again he was empty-handed and had no ties to any place in particular.

That evening when they went to bed, the two brothers stayed awake under their bed-clothes and murmured to each other : " Now that we've got all this wealth, if some one were to go and kill the King we could become kings." The Idiot heard them, however, and said : " All right, I'll go and kill him for you." " Nonsense, child," said they, " people don't kill kings."

As soon as his brothers were asleep, however, the Idiot got up and found a knife and stole out of the house. He walked and walked, till at length he came to the King's palace. He went into the bedchamber and saw the King asleep on a couch, so he cut off his head and carried it home to his brothers, saying : " See, I have killed the King, and this is his head. Now, wake up, rise, and be kings in his stead."

The brothers were greatly frightened, and hit on a stratagem to conceal their connection with the murder. They killed a he-goat and put its head in a nose-bag, and gave it to the Idiot and said : " Well, as you have killed the King, come, take his head away somewhere and throw it down a well, so that no one will know." The Idiot took the nose-bag and emptied the head out of it down the well outside their door. Meantime the brothers concealed the King's head carefully elsewhere.

Next morning the crier went through all the streets and through the bāzār, crying : " Last night some one killed

the King. If any one has news of the murder, let him speak." Out ran the Idiot when he heard this, crying : " I killed the King ! " " How did you do it ? " asked they. " Oh, just that way," said he, " and, see, I threw the head down this well."—" Come along, then, and get it out for us."

Then they seized the brothers too, as accomplices. In vain they protested : " God is our witness that this fellow's mad ; he's only talking his insane nonsense," but no one believed them.

Finally, they lowered the Idiot himself down into the well and said : " Bring out the head." When he got down his hand touched the goat's head, and he felt that it had horns and a goat's beard. From the bottom of the well he called up : " I say, had your King got long horns ? And had he a goat's beard ? " But they only answered : " Boy, bring up the head for us to see."

When he came up they saw he was holding the head of a he-goat, and they began to laugh. Then the brothers said : " We told you he was mad," and they were all set free.

That night, after they had all lain down, the Idiot overheard his brothers whispering together : " What can we do with this brother of ours ? Sooner or later he will disgrace us. The best thing will be to kill him some time when he's asleep, and then we shall be able to live in peace." Hearing this, he waited patiently till both the brothers went to sleep, then he got up quietly and slew them both.

Next morning the townspeople all came out to fly the Royal Bird, for it was their custom to choose for their King the man on whose head it would alight. The Idiot too went out with the crowds to see the fun. As soon as they loosed the bird it came and sat on his head. The people

were all amazed, and said : “ How could the kingdom pass to a man like that ? ” Three several times they tried, and each time the bird alighted on the Idiot’s head.

So he became King, and by the will of God he gradually grew wise and began to rule.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XIII

THE STORY OF LITTLE FĀTIMA

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

FĀTIMA was a little girl who had both her father and mother still alive, and she used to go for lessons to a learned woman, a mullā. This teacher had a little girl of her own who was also called Fātima, but the child's father was dead.

One day the mullā gave Little Fātima a vessel and said : "Go back to your home and say to your mother : 'Please give me a little vinegar.' When she goes to get it for you, you must go with her, and whatever jar she goes to take it from you must say : 'No, I don't want that,' till you come to the seventh. When she stoops over the seventh to draw the vinegar, catch her feet and throw her into the jar, and fasten down the top of it and come back to me."

Fātima did just as she was told, and thus became motherless. Some days passed after this, and one day the mullā said to her : "Go and sprinkle some coriander seed over your head. In the evening when your father comes home blow out the lamp, and then shake your head and make all the little seeds fall crackling into the fire. Your father will say : 'Child, what are these things?' Then you

must say : 'Why, Daddy, that's the result of having no mother to comb my hair and keep it nice. These horrid things have got into it.'

"Then your father will say : 'Well, what can I do?'" You must answer : 'You should take a wife to be a mother to me and look after me.' Then he will say : 'Whom shall I take to wife?' Then say : 'Go and bring a liver and hang it over the door, and whoever happens to come along first and knock her head against it will be the right wife for you.'"

Little Fātima did just as she was told, and her father got a liver and hung it up over the door. As soon as it was ready, the mullā rose up and came to their house, and her head was the first to hit against the liver. "Hullo, what's that which has hit my head?" cried she. Then the father told her the whole story, and took her and married her and brought her home.

Meantime, after forty days, Little Fātima's own mother turned into a yellow cow and came out of the vinegar jar. Her father's new wife gave the yellow cow to her step-daughter to mind, and said : "Take it out every day to graze." So Little Fātima used to take the cow out every day, and the stepmother used to give her a great pile of cotton to spin. But she was only a child and could not spin such a lot in one day, and then the stepmother used to beat her.

One day she sat down in despair and began to cry. The cow came up and ate up all the cotton, and brought out of its mouth a spindle of nicely spun cotton in exchange. And henceforward the cow did this day after day.

One day as she was sitting with her cotton the wind caught a wisp of it and threw it down a well. Poor Little

Fātima was frightened and began to cry, saying : " What shall I do, oh, what shall I do ? My stepmother will beat me." On hearing this the cow suddenly found its voice and said : " Don't cry. Go down into the well. There is a Dīv there, and you must say to her : ' Peace be upon you ! ' and salām to her nicely, and whatever she tells you to do, DO THE EXACT OPPOSITE, and find your wisp of cotton and come back."

Little Fātima did as she was told, and saw a Dīv sitting at the bottom of the well. She salāmed and said : " Peace be upon you !" and the Dīv answered : " And on you be peace ! It was well for you that you salāmed politely, otherwise I should have made just one mouthful of you. Come along now and break my head." Then Little Fātima remembered to do the exact opposite, so she washed and cleaned the Dīv's hair and combed it nicely.

Next the Dīv said : " Take these water-jars away and break them." Fātima took the jars away and filled them with fresh water. " Come now and knock down my house," but Little Fātima still remembered the cow's advice and took a broom and swept all the floors carefully.

Then the Dīv asked : " What are you doing here ? " " I came looking for my lost wisp of cotton," said Little Fātima. " Well, come along then, go into my Treasury and you will find it lying on the top of all my jewels. Take your cotton and carry off as many of the precious stones as your heart desires." The little girl went in and found her cotton, but did not even touch any of the treasures or precious stones.

Then she proceeded to climb up out of the well. When she got about half-way up the Dīv called out :

" White Wind, come and shake her ! "

And the wind came and shook her and blew her about, but she held tight on to her cotton, and nothing fell out of her pockets or her clothes. She climbed on up and up, and just as she got to the top the Dīv called out :

“ Black Wind, come and shake her ! ”

And the wind came and shook her, but nothing fell. Then the Dīv saw that she had taken nothing, and called out : “ Go away in safety, little girl, and may God make a moon grow on your forehead and a star on your chin ! ” And so it happened.

Carefully Little Fātima drew her muslin kerchief over her face and tied it down with her handkerchief, so that her stepmother should see nothing, and she went home out of the desert. When evening came the stepmother said : “ Go out, child, and fetch the copper spoon.” She went out into the dark, but it was so very dark that she could not see to find the spoon, so she pulled aside a tiny corner of her kerchief to get a little light from the moon and the star.

Now the other Fātima, the mullā's own daughter, knew her sister was afraid of the dark and had followed her quietly out to see what she would do, and when she saw the light she ran back to her mother crying : “ Mummy, Little Fātima has got a lamp of her own.” The stepmother peeped out and saw : yes, it was quite light in the other room. She went up close and discovered that Little Fātima had a beautiful moon on her forehead and a bright star on her chin, and she exclaimed : “ Why, child, how did you get like this ? ” Then the girl told her truthfully the whole story, but said : “ And whatever the Dīv told me to do I did it exactly.”

After this the stepmother, who had before treated her



“ And on you be peace ! ”

cruelly and half-starved her, giving her only a little barley and millet bread to take out into the desert for her whole day's food, now began to pet her and be kind to her.

One day she made a big loaf of wheat flour, with dates and butter and eggs in it, as if for a journey, and said to Little Fātima : " This nice loaf is for you ; now take your sister out into the desert with you and show her where your well is, and let her go down to the kind Dīv." And Little Fātima said : " All right."

Off they went together into the desert till they came to the top of the well. There Little Fātima threw in a wisp of cotton that they had brought on purpose, and said to her sister : " Go you down into the well and salām to the Dīv, and whatever she tells you to do you must do it exactly. Then get your cotton and come back."

So the stepsister went down and saw the Dīv sitting at the bottom of the well and salāmed to her. The Dīv answered and said : " It is well for you that you salāmed politely, otherwise I should have made just one mouthful of you." Then she said : " Come along and break my head." The stepsister looked round and found a large stone. She lifted it and dashed it down on the Dīv's head till it broke. Then said the Dīv : " Go and smash those water-jars," and the girl promptly threw them on the ground and smashed them to pieces. Next she said : " Pull down my house." Immediately the girl took a pick and started knocking down the house.

After this the Dīv asked : " What are you doing here ? " " I came to fetch my lost cotton," answered she. " Very well, go into my Treasury, and you will find your cotton lying on top of the precious stones ; take it, and take also as many of the jewels as your heart desires." So the step-

sister went and took her cotton and as many of the jewels as ever she could carry in her pockets and in her clothes and in her hands, and started to climb up out of the well.

When she had got about half-way up the Dīv called out :

“ White Wind, come and shake her ! ”

and when she reached the top she called :

“ Black Wind, come and shake her ! ”

And the winds came and blew and buffeted her about, and all the jewels and gold coins and precious stones she had taken went rattling down every one of them into the well.

Then the Dīv called out : “ Go away in safety, little girl, and may God make a donkey’s ears grow on your forehead and a donkey’s tail sprout from your chin ! ” And so it happened.

When she came home and her mother saw her, she beat her breast and cried : “ Good heavens, child, what is this ? ” And she brought a pair of scissors and cut off the donkey’s ears and tail and sprinkled salt on the places where they had been growing. But when morning came, there they were again.



Now it happened that the King’s daughter was going to be married, and every one had been invited to the wedding. The stepmother came to Little Fātima and gave her some beans and lentils that she had mixed together, and said : “ You must separate these out before I come back,” and she gave her an empty jar and said : “ You must cry and

cry until you have filled this jar with your tears." Then she and her daughter went off to the royal wedding.

Poor Little Fātima sat down in despair and began to cry for grief and disappointment. Then the cow came out and shook its head, and from its horns fell a cock and a hen, who separated out the beans and lentils like lightning. Then it shook its head again, and salt water poured from one of its horns and filled the empty jar.

Again the cow shook its head, and from the other horn fell a set of

beautiful fine silk clothes. Then the cow spoke to her daughter and said : "Put on

these beautiful clothes and go to the wedding-party." And Little Fātima gladly did so.



As she approached the palace her clothes looked so beautiful and costly that every one thought she must be one of the greatest ladies in the land, and they stood up as she passed and showed her to one of the best seats. And all the while her stepmother and her stepsister had only found a seat with the servants in the outer hall where people took off their shoes.

After a while the other Fātima poked her mother in the ribs and said : "Look, Mummy, I believe that's Little Fātima." But her mother said : "Nonsense, child, she's sitting blubbering at home, bad luck to her !"

When the party broke up Little Fātima rose quickly

before any one else and hurried home. As she was going the King's Son saw her and fell in love with her, and followed her till she came to the edge of a stream. She ran to jump it, and one of her slippers fell into the water. The King's Son said to one of his servants : " Pick up that slipper." When he looked at it he saw that it was a lovely little slipper, most beautifully cut.

Then he gave it to his attendants and said : " You will take this to every house in the Kingdom till you find the owner." They went round all the countryside till at last they came to Little Fātima's home. Quickly the stepmother shoved the child into the upright oven, and put a sack of millet over the mouth of it and a five-*mann* weight on top of that again.

When the Prince's men came in she brought her own daughter forward, and they tried the slipper on her, but it wouldn't fit. Now there was a cock in the house, and he flew up on to the oven and began to crow. The stepmother kept hitting at him and saying : " Shoo ! get out of that, get off !" But the messengers said : " Mother, why do you hit him ? Leave him alone and let us see what he has to say." Then they listened carefully, and heard him cry :



" Cock-a-doodle-doo, doodle-doo !
You seek the owner of that fine shoe ?
You do ?

The oven is covered up, I fear,
And that's the reason you can't see 'er,

But Little Fātima's very near,
Under me in the oven here,
She is the owner of that fine shoe,
Cock-a-doodle-doodle-doodle,
COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO ! ”

They went to the oven and lifted the little girl out and tried on the slipper, and when they found that it fitted, they carried her off to be the bride of the King's Son, and her stepmother and stepsister died of annoyance.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XIV

THE STORY OF THE BOY WHO BECAME A BULBUL

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a man who had a small son and daughter, and he had taken another wife, so the children had a step-mother.

One day the father and son were starting out to collect thorn-bushes for firewood, for the father was a thorn-cutter. As they were going off the stepmother said : " You two ought to lay a wager to-day and agree that whichever of you collects the more firewood should cut off the other one's head." The father and son agreed to do this.

They went out and gathered their firewood, and it happened that the boy collected more than his father. As they were going to tie up the two bundles the lad said : " Daddy, do you know, I'm awfully thirsty." " Well, then," said the father, " run off to the stream and have a drink." No sooner had he gone off to drink than the father took some of the thorn-bushes off the boy's bundle and added them to his own.

Then they tied up their loads, and the father said :

“Come, let’s weigh our bundles and see who has gathered more firewood, you or I.” When they weighed the loads the father’s was now the heavier, so the boy lay down, and the father cut his head off.

He carried the child’s head home and gave it to his wife and said : “Come and cook this,” and she put the head on the fire to boil. At mid-day the little sister came back from the mullā and said to her stepmother : “I’m very hungry.”—“Well, go and lift the lid of the pot and take some of the soup from the meat that’s boiling there, and come and eat it with your bread.”

The little girl lifted the lid and recognised the top-knot of her brother’s hair that was spinning round and round. She shut down the lid quickly and ran off crying to her teacher, and told her the whole story. “On no account,” said the mullā, “must you allow any of that soup to cross your lips. When the others have eaten it all up, you must gather your brother’s bones all carefully together and wash them in rose-water, and bury them in a corner of the garden. Then plant a reed to mark the place where you have buried them. Every Friday Eve you must then go to the little grave and repeat a *sūra* of the Qur’ān, and sprinkle a little rose-water over the spot.”

The girl did just as she was bid, till the seventh Friday Eve had come. On the seventh Thursday she saw a bulbul peep out of the hollow of the reed and perch on it, and the bird began to sing :

“I am a bulbul, who lost my way,
Through mountains and valleys I wandered astray.
An evil father foiled me ;
A wicked woman boiled me ;

My sorrowing sister my bones she found,
 In rose-water she washed them round,
 And buried them in the garden ground.
 For seven weeks she has come to pray
 Beside my grave each seventh day,
 And sprinkled rose-water where I lay,
 Till up out of the watered earth
 A bulbul at last I have come to birth."

And with that "whirr" and away he flew.

He flew to the shop of the needle-maker and sat on the ground and sang :

"I am a bulbul, who lost my way,
 Through mountains and valleys I wandered astray.
 An evil father foiled me ;
 A wicked woman boiled me ;
 My sorrowing sister my bones she found,
 In rose-water she washed them round,
 And buried them in the garden ground.
 For seven weeks she has come to pray
 Beside my grave each seventh day,
 And sprinkled rose-water where I lay,
 Till up out of the watered earth
 A bulbul at last I have come to birth."

The needle-maker said : "Look here, please sing that again." "All right," said the bird, "just shut your eyes and I'll sing it again." As soon as the man had shut his eyes the bulbul seized a paper of needles and "whirr" away he flew.

Then he came and perched on the foot of his step-mother's spinning-wheel and began to sing as before :

“ I am a bulbul, who lost my way,
Through mountains and valleys I wandered astray.
An evil father foiled me ;
A wicked woman boiled me ;
My sorrowing sister my bones she found,
In rose-water she washed them round,
And buried them in the garden ground.
For seven weeks she has come to pray
Beside my grave each seventh day,
And sprinkled rose-water where I lay,
Till up out of the watered earth
A bulbul at last I have come to birth.”

When he had finished his song the stepmother said :
“ Look here, please sing that again.” “ All right, open
your mouth and shut your eyes and I'll sing it again.” But
no sooner had she opened her mouth and shut her eyes than
“ whish ” like lightning he clapped the paper of needles
down into her throat, and “ whirr ” away he flew.

Then he flew to the sugar-stick-maker's shop, and sat
on the floor and sang the same song. When he had got
to the end of it the sweet-maker said : “ Look here, please
sing that again.”—“ All right, shut your eyes and I'll sing
it again.” As soon as the man had shut his eyes the bird
seized a big stick of sugar-candy and “ whirr ” away he
flew.

Then he came and perched on the foot of his sister's
spinning-wheel and began to sing :

“ I am a bulbul who lost my way,
Through mountains and valleys I wandered astray.
An evil father foiled me ;
A wicked woman boiled me ;

My sorrowing sister my bones she found,
In rose-water she washed them round,
And buried them in the garden ground.
For seven weeks she has come to pray
Beside my grave each seventh day,
And sprinkled rose-water where I lay,
Till up out of the watered earth,
A bulbul at last I have come to birth."

When he had finished she said : " Look here, sing that all over again, please." " All right," said he, " open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I'll sing it again." She did so, and " whizz " he popped the stick of sugar-candy into her mouth, and " whirr " away he flew.

And now my story has come to an end
but the sparrow never got
home.

XV

THE STORY OF THE PRINCE WHO DIDN'T EXIST

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a King who had three sons, two of them were dead and the third didn't exist ; he also had three treasure-houses, two of them were empty and the third had no door. In the Treasury that had no door there were three bows and arrows, two of them were broken and the third had no string ; there were also three knives, two of which were broken and the third had no blade. In the stable there were three horses, two of them were dead and the third had given up the ghost ; there were also three sets of saddles and bridles, two of them had rotted away and of the third there was no trace.

The King's Son who didn't exist went into the Treasury without a door and carried off the bow and arrow without a string and the knife without a blade. Then he went into the stable and saddled the horse who had given up the ghost with the saddle and bridle of which there was no trace. He mounted and rode off to hunt.

As he rode he came upon three deer, two of whom

were dead and the third was lifeless. He shot with the stringless bow and arrow at the lifeless deer, and cut off its head with the bladeless knife and tied it on the back of the horse who had given up the ghost. Then he proceeded on his way till he came to a ruin with three rooms in it; two of them had fallen down and the third had no roof. He went into the roofless room and saw that there were three cooking pots there, two of them had no sides and the third had no bottom.

He cut up the deer with the bladeless knife and put it into the pot that had no bottom, and lit a fire under it till the bones were burnt, but the meat hadn't even heard news of the fire. Then he ate till he was very thirsty of the meat that had had no news of the fire.

He mounted the horse who had given up the ghost and rode till he reached three streams of water; two of them were dry and the third hadn't a drop in it. He stooped over the stream that hadn't a drop in it and drank and drank till he lost his head.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XVI

THE STORY OF THE GOLDEN LAMP-STAND

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a merchant who had a daughter as beautiful as the rays of the sun. The girl's mother was dead, and the father had no other child but this one daughter. Now it happened that the father became very jealous of his daughter, for he intended to make her the wife of an ugly old man who was his friend, and whom he knew to be very rich. Therefore he allowed no one to see her.

Every day when he went to his shop he locked the door of his house, and every evening he opened it to let himself in. Then he used to say to his daughter : " Come, you must be the wife of this rich man who is my friend."

The girl did everything she could to turn her father from this plan, but he would not listen to her, till at last in despair she said to him : " If you want me to obey you and marry your friend, give me money enough to get the goldsmith to make me a golden lamp-stand as big as a house, so that it can carry forty little lamps at once."

The father gave her as much money as ever she wanted, and she sent for a master-goldsmith and gave it to him and

said : “ Make me a golden lamp-stand so that outside it looks like a lamp-stand and nothing else, and can carry forty little lamps or forty candles at once, but inside let there be a little house with rooms where I can live. And you must make a little door for it which I can fasten on the inside, and which when it is shut doesn’t show at all from the outside.”

The goldsmith went off and made the lamp-stand just as she had ordered it, and when it was ready he brought it home and set it in her house. Then she made her preparations, and took water and food enough for four months and hid them in the lamp-stand. And one day when her father was out she took off her shoes and put them beside the edge of the well, and went and shut herself up inside the lamp-stand, fastening the door from the inside.

Evening came, and the father returned home and saw no sign of his daughter anywhere. Hither and thither he hastened searching for her, till at last he came to the well and saw her shoes on the edge of it, and then he was certain that the girl had thrown herself in and drowned herself.

Then he mourned greatly and said : “ Lo, I have brought dust and ashes on my own head, for I persecuted my daughter to marry this man against her will, and now she has been forced to drown herself.” Thereupon he wept a little, but he told no one of her death, for he was afraid.

Some days passed after this, and whenever his eye fell on the golden lamp-stand he remembered his daughter and mourned for her, so he determined to get it taken away out of the house that it might cease to reproach him. At last he took it to the goldsmith’s shop and asked him to try to sell it.

One day the King's Son happened to pass that way, and the golden lamp-stand caught his eye ; he rode to the door of the goldsmith's shop to bargain for it. Finally he bought it and carried it home, and so much delighted was he with it that he had it placed in his own private room.

Now this was what his custom was. Every evening he had supper brought to his room, and after he had eaten it he set the rest aside for his breakfast. One morning when he got up he saw that some one had eaten his supper, and there was very little left. "What does this mean?" cried he. "Who can have come into my room?"

The next night he went to bed as usual, and when he woke in the morning his supper was again half gone. Three or four days running the same thing happened. One evening he said to himself: "I'll stay awake to-night and see who it is who comes into my room." So he cut his finger and sprinkled salt in the wound, so that the pain would prevent his going to sleep, and lay down and wrapped himself in the bedclothes.

About midnight he saw the door of the lamp-stand open quietly, and a girl stepped out as beautiful as the rays of the sun. She went straight to his supper bowl, ate as much as she wanted, and went again into the lamp-stand and shut the door. Not with one heart, but with a hundred hearts the King's Son fell in love with the beautiful maiden ; he waited patiently, however, till next evening.

Then again he wrapped himself up in the bedclothes and pretended to be asleep. When midnight came the door of the lamp-stand opened, and a girl as beautiful as the sun came out and went straight to his supper-bowl, ate as much as she wanted, and vanished again into the lamp-stand. Not

with one heart, but with a hundred hearts the King's Son was now in love with the beautiful maiden.

One more day he waited, and when evening came he pretended to be asleep till once more the girl came out and ate some supper. Then just as she was about to disappear, he rose and seized her by the wrist, and said : " In the name of the God who created thee, speak ! that I may see whether thou art a human maiden or a jinn or a perī. Who and what art thou ? " Then answered the girl : " Nay, I am a human maiden," and she told him her story from the very beginning.

Then the King's Son made a declaration saying : " I have fallen in love with thee." Now it chanced that she also had fallen in love with the King's Son, and they agreed together that they would let no one know, and they would spend every evening together, but that the girl would hide in the lamp-stand all the day.

Each evening, as soon as every one else was asleep, she used to come out and join the King's Son, and they passed the night happily in conversation, love, and pleasure. Then when morning came she would disappear into the lamp-stand.

Now it happened that one night one of the King's slave-women was awake and heard the sound of voices coming from the room of the King's Son. She stole up to the door and peeped in, and saw that the Prince was sitting with a very beautiful maiden, and they were talking together. This news was told by the one slave woman to another, who told it to a third, and so on and so on, till the story became known, and at last it reached the ears of his uncle's daughter, who was the betrothed of the King's Son.

This Princess spoke to one of the slave-women and

said : “ You must find out somehow where this girl comes from every night.” So the woman kept careful watch one night, and saw the maiden come out of the lamp-stand in the evening and go back into it next morning. And she brought this news to the Prince’s betrothed.

One day that the King’s Son had gone out hunting, the cousin Princess sent a message to the mother of her betrothed saying : “ I have guests coming to-day. Pray lend me the golden lamp-stand to adorn my room.” Now the Prince had given the strictest orders that no one was ever to lay a finger on his lamp-stand, and at first his mother refused to lend it. But the Princess sent message after message, till at last, by reason of her obstinacy, they were forced to send over the lamp-stand.

Then she lighted forty candles and fastened them on it, and little by little the stand grew hotter and hotter. The unfortunate girl inside bore it as long as she could, but at last her whole body was burnt and blistered, and she could not stand it any more, so she opened the door and rushed out and flung herself into a tank of water which was in one of the rooms, and fainted.

Every one thought she was dead, so they wrapped her up in a piece of felt carpet and gave the body to one of the slaves, and said : “ Take this away and throw it into the city moat.” So he came and took the unconscious girl, all wrapped up as she was, and carried her off and threw her into the moat.

Now a poor old man happened to pass that way, and he heard a noise coming up out of the moat as of some one groaning. He looked about and went nearer, and saw a girl whose body was all blistered and burnt wrapped up in a felt carpet and flung in there. He was a lonely old

STORY OF THE GOLDEN LAMP-STAND 101

man and had no children, so he took the girl home to his house and gave her medicine and food, until God granted that her wounds healed and she became quite well again. So she was now the old man's daughter.

Now to go back again to the King's Son. When he came home that night from his hunting, he found the lamp-stand in its place, but the door was open and there was nobody inside. He asked this one and that one : " Who touched my lamp-stand ? " but they were all too frightened to tell him anything. Then he grew ill with sorrow and grief, and a fever came on, and for forty days he was sick and in bed and would take no medicine and eat no food.

All the doctors and physicians in the kingdom were brought to his bedside, but none of them was able to cure him. At last one came who said : " The King's Son is in love, and nothing will cure him but the sight of his beloved."

Now the King had a wazīr who was very wise, and he sent for him to come and give counsel. So they sent out a crier, as the Wazīr suggested, through all the streets and bāzārs, saying : " Let all the people of the town, rich and poor, great and small, cook a dish and bring it for the King's Son. Perchance one of them will tempt him and he will eat and get well."

All the people of the town, nobles and great men, king's officers and craftsmen, labourers and beggars, all of them cooked a dish of some sort or other, and at noon brought it for the Prince. Now when the poor old man came home and brought news to his adopted daughter of the King's Proclamation, she said : " Well, go to the bāzār and bring me a little barley meal." The poor man went and bought it and brought it home. The girl sifted the flour and made

dough, and cut it into very fine strips and made a good *āsh*, and poured it into a glazed earthen bowl, and threw into the bowl a ring which the King's Son had given her as a gift. Then she said to the old man : " Take this now to the Prince."

As the poor old man went along carrying the earthen bowl of *āsh* everybody laughed at him and said : " What sort of a fine dish is this to take to the Prince ? " And he began to weep, and implored them saying : " Don't break my heart. I am a poor man and this is the best I have, suffer me also to go to the King's Son."



Now it happened that the Prince would not accept any of all the dainty dishes that were brought, but when he saw the poor old man who had brought the best he had, his heart was touched, and in order not to hurt his feelings he called him up and ate a spoonful of his *āsh*. It tasted very good, and he was hungry after his long fast, and he ate it all to the very end. When the bowl was empty his eye fell upon his own ring, and he nearly fainted with delight.

He sent for the old man and saw him privately and said : " Now, tell me the truth. Who cooked this *āsh* of yours ? " Then the old man told him the whole story of how he had found the maiden cast away in the city moat, and the King's Son sent messengers and they brought her in. Then he decorated and illuminated seven cities, and he married the beautiful maiden of the lamp-stand and they became man and wife.

STORY OF THE GOLDEN LAMP-STAND 103

And to the poor old man they gave robes of honour and presents and high offices in plenty.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XVII

THE STORY OF THE WOLF-AUNT— A MORAL FOR HUSBANDS¹

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
GOD.

THERE was an old man whose business was to gather thorn bushes for fuel. He had one wife and seven daughters, and was very poor. Every day that came he used to go out to his thorn-gathering, and he used to sell in the bāzār each evening the load of thorns which he had brought back. All the while his wife and daughters worked hard at their spinning, and so they were just able with the greatest difficulty to keep from starving.

So it went on, till one day he went out as usual to gather thorns and was very late in coming back. The call to evening prayer had sounded before he came along on his way home carrying his load of thorns. As he came down a certain street an old woman dressed in her outdoor clothes, with black mantle and white veil, came out of a door just in front of him.

¹ In Persia women as a general rule dislike the sisters of their husband, though these are usually very fond of their brother's children. To a child, therefore, there are two kinds of "aunt"—the mother's sister (khāla), whom he is taught to love, and the father's sister ('amma), who spoils him and is kind to him, but whom his mother tries to teach him to hate and fear. The above story is told to children to encourage due distrust of their father's sister.

As soon as she caught sight of the Thorn-gatherer she stepped forward and said : " Brother, where have you been all this time ? May I be your sacrifice ! May I die before you ! It is years since I have heard news of you. Come in and sit down, and let me hear how you are and how the world is using you. How many have you at home ? How do you earn your bread ? Come in and tell me everything, and pour out all your woes."

Then he answered : " In truth the world uses me hardly enough. I have a wife and seven daughters. Every day I am obliged to go out and gather thorns and sell them to feed myself and them. And so he poured out all his sorrows into the ears of his newly-discovered sister. Then she spoke : " Don't fret, brother dear, and don't worry. I am a rich woman. I have such and such goods and chattels, such and such storehouses, such and such landed properties, and such and such wealth, and you are my own brother. When I left home you were only a little boy, but you haven't changed much, and I still recognised you from your likeness to the child I remember. Brother, why should you slave and starve ? Come and live with me, and take it easy, and don't go out gathering thorns any more. Go off, now, and bring your wife and all your children. As long as you live and God gives me a mouthful of bread we shall share it together."

With that the old woman seated herself where she was, while the Thorn-gatherer hurried home and told the whole story to his wife : " Truly, my dear, God has been kind to us. I had a sister, and now she is found again. She is rich and has no relations and no children. We have agreed that I and you and our daughters shall go and live with her, and she will provide for us."

Then he took his wife and daughters by the hand, and they went off to where the aunt was sitting waiting, and she carried them all off to her home and made all preparations to entertain them kindly. She gave them every sort of good food in plenty, and bought them nice clothes, and little by little they began to put on flesh and became fit and well.

Some time passed thus, and one day the wife said to her husband : " Look here, my dear, this sister of yours is showing us so much kindness and generosity, it would be a good thing if we cooked some nice dish some day and sent it in to her." He said : " What can we send ? We have nothing." " Go off to the bāzār," answered she, " and buy a liver and bring it to me. I'll cook it very nicely and we'll send it to your sister."

So he went to the bāzār and brought home a liver. The wife washed it well, and cut it up and cooked it nicely and put it in a bowl. As soon as evening approached, she gave the dish to her little daughter and said : " Go and carry this to your aunt." When the child reached her aunt's door she peeped in before entering and saw that her father's sister had turned into a wolf and was eating a man. She gave a start of terror and fainted away.

The mother ran up and caught her in her arms, and took her back to their own room and brought her round. As soon as she came to herself the mother asked : " What happened to you, my child ? " Then the little girl told her what she had seen.

An hour later the husband came home, and his wife said to him : " This sister of yours, husband, is not a human being. She is a wolf who puts on a human body, and she has brought us all here to fatten us and eat us up. Come

and let us fly from here this very night." But the husband answered: "Shame upon you, wife! In return for all the kindnesses of my sister you call her a wolf!" And whatever she said he refused to listen to it or believe it.

As soon as evening was come and every one had gone to bed, the wife got up quickly and wakened her seven daughters and carried them straight off to their old home, and settled down there. When morning came the husband woke and saw no sign of his wife and children. He understood what had happened, and went to his sister and complained: "Look, last night my wife said to me: 'Your sister is a wolf who eats human beings, come and let us fly from here,' but I paid no heed to her. Now when I get up this morning I find she has fled and carried off the children."

The old woman said nothing, but waited till evening. As soon as the Thorn-gatherer was asleep she turned as before into the shape of a wolf and came to his bedside and said: "Well, now, as the others have escaped my clutches I shall eat you to-night. Tell me which you would rather I did—eat you down from your head, which is juicy, or up from your feet, which are tasty?" The poor man said: "Do whichever you prefer."

Then she tore him in pieces and ate him, and if he had listened to his wife this would never have happened.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XVIII

THE STORY OF NĪM TANAK, OR HALF-BOY

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a King to whom no children were born, and this made him very sorrowful, till one day from grief and sorrow he wandered out alone into the desert. As he went he overtook a derwīsh and they exchanged greetings, then the derwīsh asked : “ Who are you, and where are you going to ? ” Thereupon the King told him how matters were. “ How many wives have you ? ” “ Four,” answered the King.

On this the derwīsh gave the King four apples and said : “ Give one of these to each of your wives to eat.” The King was greatly pleased, and took the apples home and gave them to his wives. Three of them ate their whole apples, but the fourth ate only half of hers and put the other half on a shelf, meaning to eat it later in the day, but a crow came and carried it off and flew away, and she was too much afraid to tell the King.

In due time children were born to all the wives ; one of them had a daughter, two of them had sons, and the fourth had half a son. The King was very angry with the mother

of the half-child, and drove her and her infant from his presence and treated them with great unkindness. But he was full of affection and goodness for his daughter and his two sons, and educated them well, and brought them up carefully, and sent them to the *madrāsah*, and made them his heirs, but poor Nīm Tanak, the half-boy, had to play with the children of the servants and slaves, and never dared enter his father's presence.

Now it came to pass that a Dīv fell in love with the King's Daughter. One day when she was out hunting with her brothers the Dīv suddenly appeared in the air and carried off the Princess, and flew with her to the cave where he lived. When this news was brought to the King he was very sorrowful and wept a while. Then he gathered an army together and sent it under the command of his eldest son to fight the Dīv.

From afar the Dīv saw them coming and asked the King's Daughter : "What is that?" She answered :

"Dust I see, and a cloud of sand,
A youthful horseman is at hand."

"What's he doing?" asked the Dīv. "Drinking water," replied the girl. "How's he drinking?"—"He's drinking slowly, sip by sip," said she. "Come, then," said the Dīv, "let us laugh till we can laugh no more, for victory is ours."

Then the Dīv took his weapons and went out to battle with the youth. As soon as the lad saw him his arms grew limp with fear. The Dīv seized him and carried him off into the cave and hung him up by the top-knot of his hair. Meanwhile the army fled and brought the news to the King.

The King gathered a second army and entrusted it to his second son, and they marched out as the former had

done. When they approached the cave the Dīv asked the Princess : “ Well, what do you see ? ” She answered :

“ Dust I see, and a cloud of sand,
A youthful horseman is at hand.”

“ What’s he doing ? ”—“ Eating grapes.”—“ How’s he eating them ? ” “ One at a time,” said the maiden.—“ Come, then, let us laugh till we can laugh no more, for this time victory is ours.”

To cut a long story short, he seized the young prince like his brother and brought him to the cave, and hung him up by his eyelashes. The army fled and brought the news to the King, who was in despair.

Then Nīm Tanak saw that it would be no use to ask his father for an army, so all alone he mounted his horse and rode out to give battle to the Dīv. As he drew near the cave the Dīv again asked the girl : “ What do you see ? ”

“ Dust I see, and a cloud of sand,
Nīm Tanak riding close at hand.”

“ What’s he doing ? ”—“ Drinking water.”—“ How’s he drinking it ? ” “ He has bent down over a stream and he’s drinking up water and mud and everything there is in it,” answered the Princess. “ Come, then,” cried the Dīv, “ let us weep till we can weep no more, this time defeat is ours.”

As he came nearer the Dīv again said : “ Look and see what he’s doing now.”—“ Eating grapes.”—“ How’s he eating them ? ” “ Bunches and bunches at a time, leaves and stalks and all,” said she.—“ Come, then, let us weep till we can weep no more, defeat is ours.”

The Dīv this time hadn’t the courage to go out and fight.



The Div was forced to take up his weapon and go out.

Nīm Tanak came right up to the mouth of the cave, and at last the Dīv was forced to take up his weapons and go out. Nīm Tanak gave him no pause and no respite ; he smote him with his sword and cut him in two halves. The Dīv fell to the ground and began to wail and lament, saying : “ Strike me once more with thy sword and make an end.”

Nīm Tanak was just about to smite him once again to kill him outright, as he thought, when his sister cried : “ God forbid ! If you strike him again he will come to life.”

So he left the Dīv in two halves and set his brothers free, and carried off his sister, and they went home to the King. Then his father loved Nīm Tanak greatly, and set the two brothers aside and made him his heir.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XIX

THE STORY OF THE BROTHER WHOSE LUCK WAS ASLEEP

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
GOD.

THERE was a father who had two sons. When he died the young men came and divided the property fairly.

The younger brother took no trouble about his land, but always had good and plentiful harvests. The elder brother toiled from morning till night and wore himself out, but never had any crops at all.

At last he came to his younger brother and said : “ See, your share of our father’s land is better than mine, let us exchange.” They did so, but it made no difference ; again the younger brother’s crops were good and the other’s very bad.

One day the elder Brother bethought himself of a plan—he would go to his brother’s heap of fresh-reaped corn and steal some and spread it on top of his own. In the evening, therefore, he rose up and took a donkey and a sack and went to his brother’s place. As he was just going to steal the corn a man stepped out in front of him and cried : “ Who are you ? And what are you doing here ? ” He went

up to this stranger and asked : “ Nay, rather, who are *you* ? ” “ Oh, I’m your brother’s Luck,” said he, “ and I keep watch here that no one may steal his corn.” “ Well, where’s *my* Luck, then,” asked the unfortunate elder Brother.

“ Your Luck is in such and such a place on the top of such and such a mountain. And if you want the work of your hands to prosper you must go off there and wake him.” So the big Brother went home and set his affairs in order, and gave his property in charge to his younger brother and collected all that was necessary for his journey and set his face to the road.

He travelled and travelled till he found a lion in his path. The lion came up to eat him, but he begged and implored that his life might be spared. “ I’ll let you go in safety,” said the lion, “ on condition that you tell me exactly what your business is and where you are off to.”

Then the man told the whole story of himself and his brother, and said : “ So now I’m going to wake my Luck.” The lion said : “ When you have wakened him, ask him this question on my behalf : ‘ Why is it that such and such a lion, however much he eats, never feels satisfied ? What is the cure for this ? ’ ” “ Very well,” answered the Brother.

He went on and on again, till he came to a village, and stayed the night there. There was an old man there who was the lord of the village, and was himself a cultivator, and he had a daughter. He entertained the traveller that night, and in the course of conversation asked him : “ Where are you going to ? ” In reply he told again all the story of himself and his brother : “ So I’m going now to wake my Luck.” His host said : “ When you have wakened him, say : ‘ Such and such a cultivator says : “ I have a piece of ground, and however much trouble I take, digging it up

THE BROTHER WHOSE LUCK WAS ASLEEP 115

and watering it, it won't yield a good harvest." Now, what's the matter with it? And what's the remedy.'" The Brother agreed.

In the morning he started out again, and travelled on and on till he came to a city. This city had a King, whose command was that when any stranger arrived he should at once be brought into the King's presence. As soon as the elder Brother reached the city gate the King's men seized him and carried him to the royal presence. "Who are you? Where is your home? What has brought you here?" He told the King the whole story, and wound up: "And so now I am going to wake my Luck." "Well," said the King, "when you've wakened him, say: 'A certain King says: "I take a great deal of trouble for my country and my people, and yet my kingdom has not the glory and prosperity that it ought to have." Now what is the remedy for this?'" The Brother agreed and set out again.

He travelled on and on till he reached the mountain. He climbed up it and saw a tall man lying asleep, and the sound of his snoring rose in the air. He kicked him with his toe and said: "Get up! Are you going to go on sleeping for ever?" The man got up and rubbed his eyes and said: "Well, now that I am awake, you may set your mind at rest, I shan't go to sleep again any more."

The Brother then asked his questions and got the answers, and started out on his homeward way. He travelled and travelled till he came back to the same city, and they brought him again before the King. "Well, did you wake your Luck?" "Yes," said he. "Did you ask him my question?"—"Yes."—"Well, what did he say?"—"Give orders that every one should leave the room and I will tell you privately." The King gave orders, and every one went

out, leaving them alone. Then the Brother spoke and said : “ My Luck said : ‘ The reason that your kingdom does not prosper is because you are a woman, and a woman’s rule is never glorious.’ ” The King began to implore him, saying : “ O, What’s-your-Name, don’t tell my secret to any one. Now that you have learnt it, I shall hand over my kingdom to you and become your wife.” “ Nay, not so,” answered he, “ I must go home to my own country, and now that my Luck is awake my property will yield good harvests.” Much as the King implored him to stay, saying : “ I will give you ten such properties ! ” he would not listen, and left the city.

On and on he went till he came back to the same village and went to the house of the same old man, who again received him as his guest and asked : “ Well, did you wake your Luck ? ” — “ Yes.” — “ And what is my answer ? ” — “ He says there is a treasure buried under the ground which you are cultivating. Dig out the treasure and the ground will yield well.” The old man brought tools, and they both worked hard and dug and dug till at last they came on a very great treasure : seven jars of Chosroes all full of gold, and over the mouth of each jar a golden brick, and on the top of each brick a golden cock. Then the old man came up and said : “ O, What’s-your-Name, I am old and have one foot in the grave. Come, take my daughter and this treasure and all shall be yours.” “ Nay, not so,” answered the Brother, “ I must go back to my own country. My Luck is now awake and my property will yield good harvests.” And though the old man persisted and begged and implored him to stay, he would not consent, and started out again.

He travelled on and on till he came to the lion, who

came out to meet him, and said : “ Well, come and tell me all your adventures on your journey. Did you wake your Luck ? ” The Brother related all that had happened to him, and told of the King who was a woman and had wanted to marry him, and of the cultivator with his treasure who offered him his daughter’s hand. “ Well, and what was his answer to my question ? ” asked the lion. “ My Luck said,” answered the elder Brother, “ that whenever you meet a man who is a fool you should tear him to pieces and eat him ; that is the cure for your trouble.”

The lion thought for a moment, and then said : “ Well, the truth is I never met a man who was a greater fool than thou art ! ” and therewith he tore him in pieces and ate him.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XX

THE STORY OF THE FOX'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a Fox who went one day into a reed-brake to play, and in playing he broke one of the reeds. He took it and put it over his shoulder like a pilgrim's staff and walked off. A Cock happened to be standing on the edge of a wall, busy praising God by reciting His name aloud. When he caught sight of the Fox, he cried : "Hullo, Master Fox ! What play-acting is this ? What have you put a pilgrim's staff on your shoulder for ? "



The Fox replied : "Nay, then, thou Muezzin of God, who callest the Faithful to prayer, this is no play-acting nor conjuring trick. Those evil deeds which you saw and which

I used to do of old, I have renounced them all. I am now going on a pilgrimage to Mecca :

To the House of God I make my way,
 There to worship and there to pray.
 Though of old I did evil and went astray,
 I repent, and turn from the world away.
 Never again shall I steal or thiefe
 Or plunder the hen-roosts as long as I live.
 The estate of my father lies in my hand,
 In peace and in virtue I'll live on my land."

The silly idiot of a cock was taken in by these pious words, and said : " O, Master Sheikh, I long to go with you on your pilgrimage." " Very well," said the Fox, " you will be most welcome. Pray come, and let us set out." So the Cock flew down and started off in company with the Fox.

When they had travelled some little distance they came to the bank of a river. A Waterfowl was swimming about in the river, and when she saw the Cock coming along with the Fox she made her voice heard from the water : " O, thou Muezzin of God, hast thou forgotten to chant the praise of God that thou art thus fallen into the power of that base-born Fox ? " The Cock replied : " Nay, it is not as you think :

To the House of God he makes his way,
 There to worship and there to pray.
 Though of old he did evil and went astray,
 He repents and turns from the world away.
 Never again will he steal or thiefe
 Or plunder the hen-roosts while he shall live.
 The estate of his father lies in his hand,
 In peace and in virtue he'll live on his land."

The Waterfowl cried : “ If that is the state of affairs, I should like to go with you both on this pilgrimage,” and she came out of the water and joined them, and they travelled on all three together.

After they had gone some little way they came to a garden where a Hoopoe was sitting on the branch of a tree. When she saw the Cock and the Waterfowl coming along with the Fox she made her voice heard from the tree : “ What extraordinary fools you are ! I wonder what sin you have committed to have fallen into the clutches of the base-born Fox ! ” But the Waterfowl said : “ Nay, thou Messenger of the Prophet Sulémān, things are not as you think :

To the House of God he makes his way,
There to worship and there to pray.
Though of old he did evil and went astray,
He repents and turns from the world away.
Never again will he steal or thief
Or plunder the hen-roosts while he shall live.
The estate of his father lies in his hand,
In peace and in virtue he'll live on his land.”

“ Then,” cried the Hoopoe, “ if that is so, I should like to come with you all on your pilgrimage.” “ Welcome in the name of God ! ” said they. So the Hoopoe flew down and started off with them.

On and on they travelled till they reached the door of the Fox's hole. When they caught sight of the hole they saw feet and paws and birds' feathers scattered about and piled into heaps, and they all began to tremble with terror. The Fox saw this and said : “ Nay, do not fear, since I renounced the evil of the world I have not harmed a single

bird. Come now and sleep here, be my guests to-night, and we shall start out early to-morrow morning." So they went into the Fox's earth and passed the night as best they might.

As soon as it was day the Fox rose up and first called the Cock. He came, and the Fox addressed him : " Do you remember when you were on the roof-top what curses you hurled at me and how you made fun of me ? " The Cock began to beg and implore : " O, Master Sheikh, I am God's Muezzin, calling the Faithful to prayer ; I pray thee overlook my fault ! " " Very well, then," said the Fox, " but what right have you to climb up on to men's roof-tops, and, in the pretence that you are going to sound the Call to Prayer, cast your eyes upon their women-folk ? " " O, Master Sheikh, God created me for this sole purpose, that I should wake each dawn and sing to waken men that they should rise and pray." The Fox cried : " Even if you yourself are one of the Faithful, at any rate your mother was no better than she should be ! " And with that he ran in, and, seizing the Cock by the throat, strangled and ate him.

As soon as he had finished eating the Cock he called the Waterfowl. She also came. " Do you remember, when you made your voice heard from the water, what you said about me ? " The poor bird began with apologies and tears to beg and implore him. " Very well, I'll pass over that fault," said the Fox, " but how can I overlook this great sin ? You go into the water and swim about and beat up the waters and defile them. Then comes a believer and wants to perform his ablutions before prayer, and finds the water all dirty and impure." As he spoke he darted at the Waterfowl, and, seizing her throat, strangled and ate her.

Then he called up the Hoopoe : “ Do you remember, when you were sitting on the branch of the tree, what senseless words you uttered ? Whence do you get this fine name of yours, ‘ Messenger of the Prophet Sulémān ’ ? And how can you boast of the love which exists between you and the sons of men ? ” “ Well,” said the poor Hoopoe, “ you must admit that I was in charge of the water-wheels for the holy Sulémān’s army, and that I used to fly in the van and find water and camping-grounds for them.” “ O, you son of a burnt father ! ” said the Fox, “ if in very truth you have skill in finding water, let us see it now : find me some.” The Hoopoe alighted on the ground and began to peck at the earth with her beak to make water come forth, thereupon the Fox pounced on her from behind and made one mouthful of her.

But from out of the Fox’s mouth the Hoopoe raised her voice and said : “ Master Fox, I have one piece of good advice to give you. Open your ears to it.” The Fox wanted to say : “ Say on,” but when he opened his mouth wide like a water-jar the Hoopoe flew off.

As she was hurrying off she happened to pass an approaching army, and a Royal Falcon was flying in the van above them. The Hoopoe flew up to the Falcon and said : “ Where are you off to ? ” The Falcon answered : “ O, Messenger of the Prophet Sulémān, this army is marching forth on business.” “ What business ? ” asked she.

“ Our great King’s daughter lies very ill,
And crowds of doctors surround her still.
This they prescribe with thought and with care :
The Gall of a Fox and the Heart of a Hare,

and now for three days we have been searching and have

only just caught a hare, but so far we haven't lighted on a fox."

"That's all right," said the Hoopoe, "I've got a fox's earth close at hand. Come along and I'll show you."

Then the Hoopoe flew ahead and the Falcon and the horsemen followed behind till they came near the Fox's hole. The Hoopoe went to the mouth of it and called out: "Master Fox, you have shown me such great kindness that I am overwhelmed. Now I have come back to make you some return for it. There's a huge army coming along, and they'll certainly wreck your home. If you have any wish to save your life you must fly at once."

The Fox came to the door of his hole and saw that the Hoopoe was speaking the truth: the army was there all right. He tried to escape, but the horsemen saw him and loosed their hounds on him. He fled till he was weary, but at last the hounds overtook him and tore him to pieces. Then the horsemen came up and took his gall-bladder for the King's daughter.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXI

THE STORY OF THE SHAWL-WEAVER AND THE SEVEN SPINSTERS

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a woman who had seven daughters, and their trade was spinning ; on their wheels they used to spin fine wool. Among their customers there was a Shawl-weaver who used to come regularly to their house, buy the spindles from them, and give them the money in exchange. The mother let her eyes fall on this man, and her heart went out to him and she longed to give him one of her daughters in marriage.

One day she said to the girls : “ Put all your seven spinning-wheels in a row and sit down and begin to spin very quickly. When the Shawl-weaver comes I’ll go out and talk business with him, and every moment or so you must call out : ‘ Mother, we’ve taken off a spindle,’ and I’ll say : ‘ Put it on the shelf.’ ”

The man came as usual and the girls did as their mother had said. All seven of them sat in a row and worked their wheels very fast, and kept calling out : “ Mother, we’ve taken off a spindle.” Now the poor man was in a hurry

and was trying to put through his business and get off, and at last he grew impatient and said : “ Why do they keep shouting to you every moment ? ” The mother said : “ Oh, it’s nothing, friend ; when their spindles are full they say : ‘ We’ve taken off a spindle,’ and I say : ‘ Put it on the shelf.’ ”

The Shawl-weaver was delighted to hear of the girls’ industry, and said : “ I wonder whether you would give one of your daughters to me ? ” “ Yes, I would,” said she, and he came and was married to the eldest girl in due course, and the mother gave her to him to wife and he brought her to his home.

One day the husband said to his bride : “ I have got guests coming at noon to-day. Make all your preparations nicely and cook us a good *pulau*,” and she said : “ With pleasure,” but she hadn’t the remotest idea how to do it. So as soon as he had gone out, she went up and along to the edge of the neighbours’ roof and called out : “ Neighbours, how do people cook a *pulau* ? ” And the neighbours good-naturedly told her how you first steep the rice and boil it and strain it, and put clarified butter over it, and make it very hot. Then, feeling ashamed of her ignorance, she exclaimed : “ Dear me, is that all you do ? Why, I knew all that myself.”

They were annoyed at her rudeness, and to pay her out they cried : “ There’s just one thing more you ought to do when you want to heat up the rice at the end : put a mud-brick on top of it to keep it down, and it will heat better.” “ Bah ! ” answered the bride, “ I knew that too ! ” And she came down and did as they had told her.

At noon her husband brought his guests home with him, and called out : “ Now we are ready for lunch.” But

when he lifted the lid of the pot in which the *pulau* had been cooked he saw the rice was all full of dirt and mud, and had been utterly spoiled. He was a good deal ashamed in front of his guests, and he divorced his wife and sent her back to her own home.

His mother-in-law came along and said : " Well, well, you'd better let me give you one of my other daughters," and he said : " All right, do." And he married the second sister and took her to his home.

One day he bought some rice and sugar and clarified butter, and brought them home, and said to his wife : " Cook some nice *halwā*," and she also said : " With pleasure." When her husband had gone out she found she could not remember whether you put salt into *halwā* or not, so she went up and along to the edge of the roof and saw a man coming down the lane, and she called out : " Hullo, may you fall a prey to the corpse-washer ! You're like *halwā* which has no salt ! " And the man shouted back, laughing : " Why, my good woman, who ever heard of salt in *halwā* ? " Then the wife said to herself : " Now of course the fellow's lying, and only wants to take me in," and she came down and cooked her *halwā* with plenty of salt.

At noon when her husband came home and she fetched the *halwā* for him, he found it wasn't fit to eat, and he divorced her likewise.

Then his mother-in-law came and said : " Well, well, you'd better take my third daughter, she's better and cleverer than either of the others." And he said : " All right," so he married the third daughter and took her to his house.

One day he said : " Wife, I have guests coming to-day. Cook us *āsh* enough for three or four." " With pleasure,"

said she, but she didn't know in the least how to do it, and as soon as her husband had gone out she went up and along to the edge of the neighbours' roof and asked : " Neighbours, how do you cook *āsh* ? " They told her all about it, how you get the good soup ready first, and then take flour and sift it and make dough, and beat it out very thin and cut it into fine strips, and then you put the broth over the fire, and as soon as it is boiling you add in the cooked vegetables and lastly the thin strips of dough. Then the wife, wanting to conceal her ignorance, said : " Oh, I knew all that myself, but I thought perhaps you knew some better way ! "

One of the neighbours called her back and said : " Wait a moment till I finish telling you. You should fill a large pot with water and put it on the fire, then go and choose all the heaviest shawls your husband has and tear them into thin little strips, and boil them up till they're well cooked and put them also into the *āsh*." And the wife came down and did as she was told.

When the husband came back he went into the kitchen and said : " Have you cooked the *āsh* ? " " Yes," said she. Then he went up to the fire and took a spoon and began stirring the *āsh*, and saw that the whole of it was strips of his best shawls which kept coming out on the spoon. And he said : " What sort of an *āsh* is this that you've cooked ? " " That's how the neighbours taught me," said she. And the husband was very angry, and divorced her also and put her out of his house.

Soon after this his mother-in-law came to see him and said : " Come, you'd better take my fourth daughter, she's highly skilled in every art." So he married the fourth sister.

One day the month of Ramazān was drawing near.

The husband went to the bāzār to get the necessary supplies for the fast—clarified butter, dried curds, lentils, pease; he brought these home and said to his wife: “Now, don’t touch these, I am keeping them for Long Ramazān.” Not long after this she was out on the roof one day and saw a very tall man coming down the lane; she called out: “Brother, are you Long Ramazān?” “Yes,” said he.—“May good befall you! Please come and take your goods and chattels out of my house, they leave me no elbow-room. I’ll be glad to see the last of them.”

The man didn’t understand what it was all about, but he asked nothing better, and came and carried off all the provisions there were in the house. Now the woman did a very clever thing, as she thought, for she stole just a little handful off the top of everything before she gave it to Long Ramazān! At noon when her husband came in she said: “Husband, Long Ramazān called to-day to get those things you were keeping for him, and I did a clever thing, for I stole a little out of each of them and he never noticed.”

At this news the husband was very angry and said: “Get up and go home, you too,” and he beat her and put her out. Then his mother-in-law came and said: “Come, take my next daughter, she’s better than the others.” And he agreed, and married the fifth sister and took her to his house.

One night he went to the bāzār and bought a skin of honey and a skin of clarified butter and brought them home. Soon afterwards his wife was up on the roof one day and saw that the mud surface had all gone into cracks, and she cried: “Oh dear, oh dear, see how the poor roof’s feet are all cracked with chapping. I must go and get some grease to put on them.” So she came down and looked about and

found the skin of clarified butter and brought it up, and poured the whole of it into the cracks on the roof. But they got no better, then she went down again and brought up the skin of honey and emptied it all in too.

When her husband came home she said : " Husband, I have done a kind deed to-day." " And what was that now ? " asked he. " I happened to be up on the roof," said she, " and I saw its feet were all cracked and chapped, so I took a skin of butter and rubbed it in, but still the cracks were there, so I fetched the honey and rubbed that over them too." And he said : " Get up, you also, and go home."

This time the mother-in-law came and said : " Oh, son-in-law, I'll tell you what's the matter. Your wives have nothing to do, and because they are idle these foolish ideas overtake them. Come, now, I have other daughters left. I shall give the next to you, but you must buy cotton and wool and give them to her to spin, so that she may not get into mischief." " All right," said he, and he came and married the sixth sister.

Then he went to the bāzār and bought a little cotton and a spinning-wheel, and brought them home and gave them to her and said : " Come, now, sit down and spin." As soon as he had gone out, however, she carried her spinning-wheel and her cotton into the open air, and went and sat beside a stream of water to do her spinning.

A frog began to croak. After a time she said : " What's that you're saying, Auntie Frog ? You mean you'd like to take my cotton and spin it ? " The frog started croaking again, and she thought it must be saying : " Yes, please," so little by little she plucked the cotton to pieces and strewed it on the water and went and sat down in a corner.

When the afternoon came her husband arrived and said : " Well, and how have you been getting on with your spinning ? " " O husband," said she, " I gave my cotton to Auntie Frog to spin for me. I'm just going now to get the spindles from her, and if she doesn't give them up I'll bring back the weight off her spinning-wheel as a pledge." She went out to the edge of the stream and called : " Auntie Frog, have you spun my cotton for me ? Please bring me the spindles." The frog started croaking again and jumped with a splash into the middle of the stream. " Oh, that's what you thought, is it indeed ? Well, I'll just take the weight off your spinning-wheel instead." With that she plunged her hand into the stream, and the first thing she found was a stone. She ran ever so quickly to her husband, and cried : " See, I've carried off the weight of her spinning-wheel."

The man looked at it and saw that it was pure gold. " That's all right," said he ; " now just hide it safely in a corner and don't tell any one about it." In the morning he went out to his work. Presently the wife heard some one calling out in the lane : " Fresh *halwā* ! Sweet *halwā* ! " She jumped up and took the golden stone and ran to the door, calling to the sweet-seller : " Come along, take this weight off the frog's spinning-wheel and give me *halwā* in exchange." The pedlar looked and saw that the stone was of gold, and he gave her all the *halwā* he had and took the stone and went his way.

She took the *halwā* into the house and modelled it all into tiny figures like small dolls, and gave them names and arranged them all round the room, and said : " Now you are my servants and I am your Lady Mistress, and I'm going to lie down. If your master comes and knocks, go

and open the door for him ! ” And with that she lay down and went to sleep.

At noon the husband came home and started knocking at the door. His wife raised her head and called out : “ Flower-Face, your mistress is lying down, open the door for your master.” Nothing happened, but the knocks grew louder, so she cried : “ Do you not hear me ? Violet, get you up and go ! ”

Meanwhile the husband knocked and knocked till he was in a very bad temper. Then he went up on to the neighbours’ roof and jumped down into his own house and saw what his wife had done. Then he said : “ Get up and go home like your sisters,” and he gave her a divorce also.

His mother-in-law came to him and said : “ Come and take the seventh one, she is the best of the whole lot.” So the Shawl-weaver came and took the seventh sister and married her. One day he asked : “ Do you know how to make vinegar ? ” “ Oh yes,” said she. So he went and bought half a load of grapes and brought them home, and said to his wife : “ Make these into vinegar ! ” When he had gone out she went and asked the neighbours : “ How do you make vinegar ? ”—“ You must fill a large jar with water and stand it beside you. Then eat a bunch of grapes and drink some water on top of it, and so on till you have eaten all the grapes and emptied the jar.” So she went and did exactly as they had said.

After a while she began to feel more and more swollen up and uncomfortable, and presently she was very ill, and she went and lay down in the sun and fell asleep. At noon her husband came back and knocked at the door. “ Don’t make a noise,” called she ; “ your poor Sakīna’s been busy

making vinegar." And however much hullabaloo he made outside the door she wouldn't get up and open it.

Then he went up on to the neighbours' roof and dropped down and came in and saw what had happened. So angry was he this time that he came and carried her right out of the city into the desert. He put her lying down beside a spring of water under a tree and went his way.

When she had been sitting there some time a crow came and sat on a branch and began to caw. She thought it was a messenger sent by her husband to fetch her home, and said : " You may caw-caw, Auntie, as much as you like, but I won't come." Then a cat passed by and began to mew. " You may miauw-miauw as much as you like, Auntie, but I won't come." A dog came past barking : " You may bow-wow as much as you like, Auntie, but I won't come."

Now a certain camel from among the camels of the King, whose load happened to be a load of precious stones, had run away. Scenting water and the shade of a tree, he came towards the spring. As soon as the woman caught sight of the camel she was afraid and cried : " I wouldn't go with any of the others who came to fetch me, but for your sake, Auntie Long-Neck, I will come." And she caught the camel's leading-rope and threw it over her shoulder and started up. She walked and walked and walked till at last she reached her husband's door again. She began to knock ; he came and said : " Who's there ? "—" I am Sakīna."—" Where have you been ? "

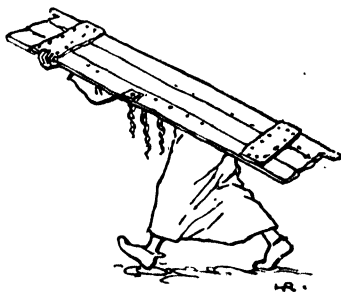
" Auntie Caw-caw came to fetch me," answered she, " but I wouldn't come back ; Auntie Miauw-miauw came to fetch me, but I wouldn't come back ; Auntie Bow-wow came to fetch me, but I wouldn't come back, but in the end

I came for the sake of Auntie Long-Neck." At that the Shawl-weaver opened the door and saw that, sure enough, she had a camel's leading-rope over her shoulder. So he took her in and led in the camel, and saw that it was laden with precious stones.

Then he pushed his wife into the upright oven and put a felt mat over the mouth of it, and said : " Don't stir from there, it's going to rain blood to-day ! Then he slew the camel, and dug a well, and put the body in and covered it up with earth. And he took the jewels and hid them, and poured the camel's blood through the felt into the oven. That was the end of that.

When morning came the criers went all through the town, crying that one of the King's camels, whose load was a load of precious stones, had got lost. The woman rushed out of the house into the lane and called out : " I found the King's camel and brought it home ! " So they came and seized her husband by the collar, and said : " Give up the camel." And though he protested again and again : " Father, the woman is mad," his words were of no avail. They replied : " No, you're telling lies," and they took him to carry him off to the King. As he was just starting, he turned to his wife and said : " Well, now you've made mischief enough ! Go and fasten the door on the back till I return."

The wife thereupon came and lifted the house door out of its sockets and put it on her back, and began to run as fast as she could after her husband. Just as they were taking him in to the King she came up behind,



carrying the door. The man turned to the King and said : “ See, the woman is quite mad and has no sense. I said to her : ‘ Fasten the door on the back till I return,’ and she has lifted the door off its hinges and fastened it on her own back ! Ask her now when she brought this camel to my house.” Then the King asked the woman : “ When did you bring home the camel ? ”—“ The same day that there was the felt cloud in the sky and it rained blood, and I was frightened and hid myself in the oven.”

Then the King saw that the woman really was quite mad, and he gave orders that the Shawl-weaver should be set free. So he took his wife’s hand and led her home, and they settled down to live together and spend the treasure of the King.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXII

THE STORY OF THE ORANGE AND CITRON PRINCESS

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a King who had a son, and the boy was sent to school. He was such a clever lad and did his work so well that the mullā grew very fond of him, and used to bless him and say : “ Run off now ; God grant that the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron may fall to your lot ! ” Time passed, and one day the young Prince said to his teacher : “ Mullā, what kind of a maiden is this Daughter of the Orange and the Citron that you always pray that God will grant her to me ? Where is her home and her dwelling-place ? ” “ Go and ask that of your mother,” replied the mullā, “ she knows her country and her dwelling.”

As soon as the boy got home he asked his mother, but she answered : “ My dear child, whoever told you to ask that question is an enemy who seeks your life. God forbid that the name of that maiden should ever again cross your lips ! ” So, without ever having seen her, the Prince fell violently in love with the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron.

He went back and told his teacher : “ However much I implore my mother, she won’t tell me anything ; she only scolds me.” “ The reason your mother won’t tell you,” said the mullā, “ is because you would have to be separated from her. If you want to compel her to help you, you must act thus : when you get home, say : ‘ Please, mother, come and fry me some eggs.’ If she says : ‘ I’ll tell such and such a maid-servant or such and such a slave-girl to come and fry them for you,’ don’t agree to that, but say : ‘ No, please, you must do them yourself.’ Then when she has put the pan on the fire and made it nice and hot, catch her firmly by the wrists and say : ‘ Either you shall tell me where the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron lives, or I’ll cut off your hands and fry them on the pan instead of the eggs ! ’ ”

The boy did exactly as he was told, and in spite of his mother’s prayers and tears and entreaties he would not let her go. In vain she cried : “ My son, this will bring only evil on you ! You will assuredly forfeit your life ! ” The more she urged, the more firmly he replied : “ There is no help for it ; you must tell me.”

When she saw that he would not let go, she said : “ All right, I’ll tell you if you insist. If you want to find the Orange and Citron Princess, you must buy seven pairs of iron shoes and travel for seven years before you arrive where she is. After one year’s travel you will reach a well. Go down it, and there you will find a huge Div. You will salām to her and kiss her hand. She will ask : ‘ Where have you come from ? ’ You will answer : ‘ I am in love with the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron.’ Then you must do exactly as she tells you.”

He went off and got seven pairs of iron shoes made for

THE ORANGE AND CITRON PRINCESS 137

himself and set out. At the end of one year's travel he found himself at the mouth of the well his mother had spoken of. He went down and saw an enormous Dīv sitting there, and her horns were twisted once round her head. He made his salām and kissed her hand. She said : " Hail, human boy, Black-hair, White-tooth, what foolhardiness and daring brought you here ? Do you want me to make one mouthful of you ? "

Then he begged and implored, and broke out into praises of the Dīv, and said : " I am in love with the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron. " " All right, " replied the Dīv, " as you are a good lad, I'll show you the way on one condition : after you have married the Orange Princess you must marry me too, and make her my slave-woman. " And to this he said : " Very well, I agree. "

She then continued : " I have seven sons who may come back at any moment. If they find you here they will tear you into little bits and eat you. " With that she said a prayer and turned him into a needle, and pinned it in the corner flap of the kerchief on her head. She had only just finished doing this when her seven sons came flying in one by one. " Mother, " they cried, " we smell a human being here. You must have caught one, and no doubt you're hiding him to eat him by yourself. " " Nay, my sons, " said she, " where could I hide a human being here ? And how could one come here when it's a year's journey to the places where men dwell ? "

They said no more, but cooked what they had brought in, dog's flesh and donkey's flesh, and ate it and lay down and slept. When they awoke in the morning they went off again. Then the Dīv said another prayer and restored the King's Son to his own shape, and wrote a letter which

she gave him, saying : “ You will take this with you, and you will journey for another year along a certain road till you come to another well. My elder sister is there, give her my letter, and do whatever she tells you. There are seven of us sisters and we live in seven wells, with a year’s journey between each, and each of us has seven sons. You can tell our ages from our horns, each thousand years we live our horns wind themselves another time round our heads. My eldest sister is seven thousand years old and has seven circles of horns round her head.”

He took the letter and travelled on till he came to the second well, and on and on, till after seven years he reached the seventh. In each case the Dīv sister saved him from being devoured by her sons by transforming him in the second well into a flower, in the third into a broom, in the fourth into a fan, in the fifth into a water-jug, in the sixth into a knife. And each of the six sisters gave him a letter to the next one, and made him promise, in return for her help, to take her to wife after he had married the Orange and Citron Princess, and give her his bride as a slave-woman.

When he went down into the seventh well he saw a Dīv sitting there, so big that in the whole world there is nothing huger, and her horns were wound seven times round her head. When he came opposite to her he salāmed and bowed himself to the earth, and kissed her hands and feet and knees. “ Ho, what a headstrong man you are ! ” said she. “ Do you not know that this is the headquarters of the Dīvs ? What foolhardiness and daring brought you here ? It is seven years’ journey hither from the places where men dwell.” Then he told her all his adventures and gave her her sister’s letter.

She placed it on her eyes and kissed it before opening

it to read. "Well, since you have brought a letter from my sister, I shall show you the country and the home of the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron, but on one condition, that when you have married her you will marry me and make her my slave-woman." To this he agreed.

Then the Dīv said: "Now my sons will be coming home, and if they see you it will be impossible to save your life." Thereupon she said a prayer and changed him into a skin rug and sat on it. No sooner had she done this than her sons came flying in one by one. "Mother, the smell of a human being is about." "My sons," answered she, "where could a human being be? It is seven years' journey hither from the places where men dwell."

Then they began to search about here, there, and everywhere, striking the door and striking the roof, and keeping up a terrible roaring in their hunt for the human being. Only after a thousand arguments and protestations and assurances did their mother succeed in quieting them. Then they cooked all the flesh they had brought home and ate and slept. When they awoke they went forth again to hunt for a new day's supplies.

Then the Dīv said a prayer and the King's Son was restored to his own shape. Next she said prayers over a piece of reed, a piece of glass, a needle, a knife, some salt, some charcoal, and some sea-foam, and gave them to him. Then she gave him instructions: "You will go by a certain road and come to a certain place which is a garden. When you reach the garden knock on the door and the gardener will open it. First, give a little money as a present to the gardener and go in, and on the bank of the stream which flows through the middle of the garden you will see an orange tree. Now give plenty of money to the gardener

and buy all the fruit of that tree as it stands. Then pull the oranges one by one and cut them in halves with a knife and throw them into the water. But whichever of the oranges says : ‘ Ah ! ’ when you go to cut it, is the one in which the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron is hidden ; put it safely under your arm and fly.

“ For you must know that this Orange Princess is under the spell of all the Dīvs and the Perīs, and they are all in love with her, and they will never cease pursuing you and trying to slay you so as to get her back again. Therefore you must fly with all speed, and when you see them close behind throw down the reed and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a reed-brake ! ’

and on no account look behind. If they cross the reeds, throw down the glass and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a place of glass ! ’

And if they cross the glass, throw down the needle and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a needle grove ! ’

If they cross the needles, throw down the knife and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a place of knives ! ’

THE ORANGE AND CITRON PRINCESS 141

If they cross the knives, throw down the salt and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a salt marsh ! ’

If they cross the salt, throw down the charcoal and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a place of fire ! ’

till at last, if they still pursue you, you must throw down the sea-foam and cry :

‘ O God, in the name of the Prophet Sulémān,
Let this desert, waste within waste and world upon world,
Become a sea ! ’ ’

The King's Son did exactly as the Dīvs had bidden him. No sooner had he thrown down the sea-foam than the world behind him became a mighty sea. Then the Dīvs saw that they could not pursue him further, but they caught sight of the piece of sea-foam floating in the midst of the great sea, and they thought it was a rock or mountain. They put their feet on it to cross over, and every one of them was drowned.

When the Prince saw that all the Dīvs had perished, he rendered thanks and praise to God, and fell down and kissed the earth and started forth. He travelled and travelled on till at last he came within two or three days' march of his own country. Then his heart could no longer endure in patience, and he peeled the orange.

Out of it stepped a maiden as beautiful as the moon on her fourteenth night, so fair that merely to look on her was

a sin. Her hair poured down over her body from head to foot, so that it was a marvel to behold, but underneath she was naked and without clothes. Then he cried : " Alas ! What shall I do ; how can I travel with this maiden till I can find clothes for her ? " Now there was a tree in that place and a spring of water, so the King's Son came to the Orange Princess and said : " Hide yourself in that tree and I shall go on into my own country and make arrangements for you, and I shall come back with clothes and servants and necessaries and take you to my home with pomp and circumstance." She agreed to this, and the Prince went his way.

There happened to be a house in the neighbourhood, and the mistress of the house had a negro slave-woman. She said to her : " Take these water-jars out to the stream, fill them, and bring them back." When the slave-woman came to the water's edge she saw a face reflected there, so beautiful that you would never tire of looking at it. The silly negress took it into her head that this was her own reflection, and cried : " By de grave of de mistress's fader—may it catch fire ! Me am so beautiful as dis ? Why den me work like one slave-girl ? "

Thereupon she pitched all her water-jars on the ground and smashed them, and ran as quickly as she could back to the house and saw—the same ugly old black slave-woman that there always was ! Her mistress cried : " O you daughter of a burnt father ! What have you done with the water-jars ? " " O Missis," cried she, " me go to de water to fill de jars, big wind come, frow down de jars, all broken ! " Her mistress was a little angry and scolded her a bit, then said : " Well, take these clothes of baby's down to the water and wash them."

Again the negress saw the same lovely reflection in the water : “ A curse on de mistress’s fader ! Me am far more beautiful dan her ! ” With that she tore the baby’s clothes to bits and scattered them on the stream, and ran as fast as she could back to the house. She went straight to the mirror, and looked and saw—the same ugly old black slave-woman that there always was ! Her mistress asked : “ What have you done with baby’s clothes ? ” Then she began to cry and whine : “ O Missis, me wash de clo’s, water am bery, bery strong, swep all the clo’s away.” Her mistress beat her a little, and said : “ Well, take baby out for a turn in the fresh air and see that he doesn’t cry.”

The negress took the baby in her arms and went again to the stream. Again she peeped into the water and saw that the reflection there was very lovely ; again she swore at her mistress, and this time she threw the baby on the ground and was just going to tear it in two. But the Orange and Citron Princess was filled with pity for the poor baby, and cried out from above : “ Hullo ! Don’t kill that child. Mine is the image you see in the water, not your own.”

Then the slave-woman looked up and saw the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron, and cried : “ O Lady, me am your sacrifice ! God grant you joy ! Who am you ? ” Then the Orange and Citron Princess told all her story to the slave-woman. “ O Missis, me come be your slave ! When de King’s son come back, you take me home.” “ All right,” said the Princess, “ but first go and take baby safely back to his mother. Then you may return to me ; I am tired of being all alone.”

So she took the child to his mother and then returned to the foot of the tree, and said : “ O Missis, me come up de tree, but how ? ” Then the Orange and Citron Princess

let her long hair right down to the ground and said : " Take my hair in your hand and climb up by that." The woman did so. As soon as she was safely up she said : " Me am an offering for you ! Me take your hair in hand to climb up, me see it all tangled and dusty. Come, let us go down, me wash, comb, make nice for you."

The Princess agreed and they came down, and the slave-woman took the lovely head of hair on her lap and combed it gently. While she was doing this her new mistress fell asleep, and the negress quickly drew out a knife and cut the maiden's throat from ear to ear, and slew her, and threw the body into the water. Some of the blood fell on the ground, and from it there sprang up in that place a wonderful rose tree, which brought forth flowers so beautiful and so sweet-smelling that all men marvelled at them. Meanwhile the slave-woman climbed up into the tree and sat down in the place of the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron.

The King's Son on his part arrived soon after with an army and servants and attendants and slaves and equipment to fetch his wife. When he reached the foot of the tree he made a sign and the negress came down. In amazement the King's Son looked at her and exclaimed : " Great Heavens ! What is this ? Who are you ?"—" Me am de Daughter ob de Orange and de Golden Citron." " That's a lie ! " cried the unfortunate Prince.



Then the woman told the whole tale that the Princess had told her. " But if you are she," said the King's Son, " why have you turned all black ?"—" Ah, dat come from all de sunshine dat catch me in de tree."—" But why did your face get all pock-marked ?"—" De crows dey come and peck my face."—

and turn it loose in the desert.” So the old woman told him the whole story of how the maiden had come to her.

Then the King’s Son sent for the Daughter of the Orange and the Golden Citron, and they brought her. When she came he threw his arms round her neck and wept a while, then he inquired : “ What overtook thee ? ” Thereupon she related to him the whole tale of the wicked slave-woman.

Forthwith the King’s Son ordered them to tie the negress and her infant to the tail of a wild horse, and drive them out into the desert until they were battered to pieces.

Then he had seven cities decorated and illuminated, and solemnly married the Orange and Citron Princess, and she became his wife and he became her husband, and they began to live their lives together.

May God who granted the desire of the King’s Son
Grant also the desire of all creation !

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXIII

THE TALE OF THE WISE QĀZĪ

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was once a villager who found a horse-shoe out in the desert. He had so little brains that he didn't even know what it was, so he took it to the Qāzī of the village (who was a very wise man) and asked him : "What is this ?"

The Qāzī said : "I can't think what you people will do when I am dead ! Why, this is the moon which grew old and fell to earth !"

Some time afterwards a crow came to this village, and, perching in the top of a tree, began to say : "Caw, caw." The people came to the Qāzī and said : "Come along out and see what God's Messenger is saying." The Qāzī came to the foot of the tree and looked up. Then he said : "I'll just go up myself and see what he says. You people tie two ropes to my feet, so that if God's Messenger tries to carry me off you can pull me down safely." So the villagers tied two ropes to the Qāzī's feet.

He climbed the tree and put his head out between two boughs to tie the crow's leg, but the bird flew hastily away.

The villagers below, fearing that it was trying to fly away with their Qāzī, began to pull with all their might. The poor man's head caught in the fork and stayed behind, while his body was dragged down.

Then a dispute arose among the villagers. Some of them said : "The Qāzī used to have a head," and some of them said : "He used not." At last they came to an agreement : "Let us go to his house and ask his wife." They went along to the house and knocked at the door. The Qāzī's wife came and stood behind the door and called out : "What do you want ?"

"We only want," said they, "to ask you whether the Qāzī, your husband, used to have a head or not ?"

"I can't be sure whether he had or not," answered she. "I only know that when he munched his bread his beard used to wag."

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXIV

THE STORY OF MUHAMMAD TĪRANDĀZ THE ARCHER

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was once a man called Muhammad who was a shawl-weaver. One day he was sitting behind his shawl, weaving away, when it chanced that he saw two mice playing about and riding on each other's back. As he threw the shuttle into his warp it slipped from his hand and hit the two mice, killing both of them at one blow.

Thereupon all Muhammad's fellow-apprentices began to chaff him and say : " Bravo ! Well done ! Your name should be :

'Tīrandāz,¹ Muhammad of the Bow,
Slaying with his arrow two lions at one blow.'

Why do you sit here weaving shawls? you ought to be an archer."

Muhammad listened to these words and took them seriously and believed them all, so he rose up from his work and went home to his own house. He caught his mother

¹ Tīr-andāz means "arrow-shooter," archer.

MUHAMMAD TĪRANDĀZ THE ARCHER 151

by the collar and got a little money from her, and took it to the bāzār to buy a bow and arrows for himself. On the bow and arrows he made them write :

“I am Muhammad Tīrandāz, Muhammad of the Bow,
Slaying with my arrow two lions at one blow.”

Then he threw the bow and arrows over his shoulder and set off for the desert.

He went on and on for a good way, and arrived thirsty and weary at the edge of a stream of water. He quenched his thirst, hung his bow and arrows in the fork of a tree, and then lay down under its shade and fell asleep. When he was still sleeping, one of the King's horsemen came riding by and chanced to pass close to the foot of the tree. There he saw a strong, sturdy youth asleep, his bow and arrows hung above his head.

The horseman was amazed at the strong appearance of the young man and came up to look at his weapons, and saw that it was written on them :

“I am Muhammad Tīrandāz, Muhammad of the Bow,
Slaying with my arrow two lions at one blow.”

So he sat down at the youth's side and waited for him to wake. Then he asked : “Who are you ?” and got the reply :

“I am Muhammad Tīrandāz, Muhammad of the Bow,
Slaying with my arrow two lions at one blow.”

“What business brings you here, then ?” asked the horseman.—“I came into the desert to do a little hunting.”—“Good, and are you really a good shot ?” To this Muhammad replied : “Yes.”—“Then I shall take you with me

to the King, and you shall be one of the King's household. And then some day when war happens to break out you can fight for the King." "Right you are," said Muhammad.

Now the horseman had some bread and other things in his saddlebags. He brought them out and they ate together, and he took the new-found archer along with him and brought him into the King's presence, and explained: "This is Muhammad Tīrandāz the Archer, who slays two lions at one blow."

Then the King gave Muhammad a gift and an appointment in his household, and he fixed a certain salary for him. So Muhammad made himself at home there, and day or night his only work was to eat and sleep—which was really just as well, for there was nothing else that he knew how to do. So things went on till one day it chanced that war broke out, and an enemy's army came and besieged the city of the King.

Immediately Muhammad Tīrandāz was summoned, and the King said: "Now you'd better go out and fight." Muhammad could do nothing but agree, and so he said: "With pleasure."

They brought a horse for him to mount to ride out to the battlefield. Now Muhammad, who hadn't the faintest idea how to ride, was afraid that no sooner would he mount than the horse would throw him to the ground. So he said: "Tie my feet tightly together under the horse's belly." Then the grooms marvelled greatly, but they thought he must be going to perform some wondrous exploit since he bade them do this strange thing, so they tied his feet as he had said.

Then he slung his bow and arrows on his back and took the reins and set out for the battle. On the way the bridle

slipped from his hand, the horse bolted with him and began to gallop. In their wild career they came near a tree, and Muhammad in great fear stretched out his arms to clutch it and try to stop himself. As he grasped it the force of the galloping horse tore it up by the roots, and on they dashed, Muhammad waving the tree and shouting : " Catch the reins ! Catch the reins !" in the hopes that some one would stop his horse.

Now the army of the other side, when they saw a champion galloping towards them waving a tree, were terrified, for they thought there must be an army of the King's coming up behind them to cut off their retreat to whom Muhammad was calling, and that he meant : " Catch the enemy's reins and prevent their escaping !" So from sheer terror they turned tail and took to flight. Meanwhile the King's army galloped up and pursued and defeated them.

And the grateful King gave many presents and robes of honour to Muhammad Tīrandāz the Archer, and he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the King's armies.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXV

THE STORY OF THE COUNTRY OF FOOLS

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a man who got married and took his wife to his house, where he also had a goat. One day the husband was out and the bride was alone in the house with her mother-in-law. The young wife was busy sweeping when she caught her foot in something and fell among the water-jars and broke one. She was very much ashamed, and gathered up the pieces and hid them.

Then she went up to the goat and said : “ O goat, say nothing to my husband about my having broken the jar, will you ? And I’ll give you whatever you wish.” The goat gave a bleat. Thereupon the bride went off to the chest containing her dowry and took out a dress of her own and threw it on the goat, and cried : “ That’s for you ! ”

The goat bleated a second time, and she fancied it must mean that this wasn’t enough, so she went and took out a second garment and threw it over the first. In short, this went on until she had thrown on to the goat’s back all her trousseau and all her plenishing, and still the goat went on bleating.

Hearing some disturbance, the mother-in-law called out : " What's the matter ? What *are* you doing that for ? " " Such and such an accident happened," said the wife, " and I'm afraid of the goat's telling my husband."

Just at this moment, while the women were still talking to the goat, the bridegroom returned. He heard the sound of voices and stopped to listen and see what they were saying. When he heard what it was all about and saw what a pair of fools they were, he turned away saying : " They have brought disgrace on the graves of their fathers. I must go away, I really can't stay here. They are the most appalling fools ! "

With that he left the town and went on and on till he came to a tribe of nomads. He was thirsty, and went up to the door of one of their black tents and said : " Have you nothing you could give me to drink ? " They filled a wooden bowl with buttermilk and brought two scones for him, and he ate and drank.

Then he saw that the bowl was so caked with dirt that there was hardly any space left inside it, so he put a stone in it to sink it and dropped it into a stream of water. After it had steeped a while he took it out and scraped it, and when the dirt came out it was much larger. The owners of the bowl came presently to get it back and they noticed that he had enlarged it. " Hullo, what's your business ? " asked they. " I am a bowl-scraper," said he.

So they went back to their fellow-tribesmen and made it known that a bowl-scraper was come, and all the nomads of the tribe assembled, and one by one they brought their bowls for him to scrape. And he steeped them all in the stream and made them bigger, and took money for the work. He saved quite a little there and went away.

Then he travelled on till he reached a village where there were cotton plantations, and he saw that crowds had collected and that some great dispute was going on. He went forward and asked: "What's the matter?" "We planted cotton," answered they, "and now cotton-thorn has sprung up in our fields and we don't know what to do." "Let me look," said he.

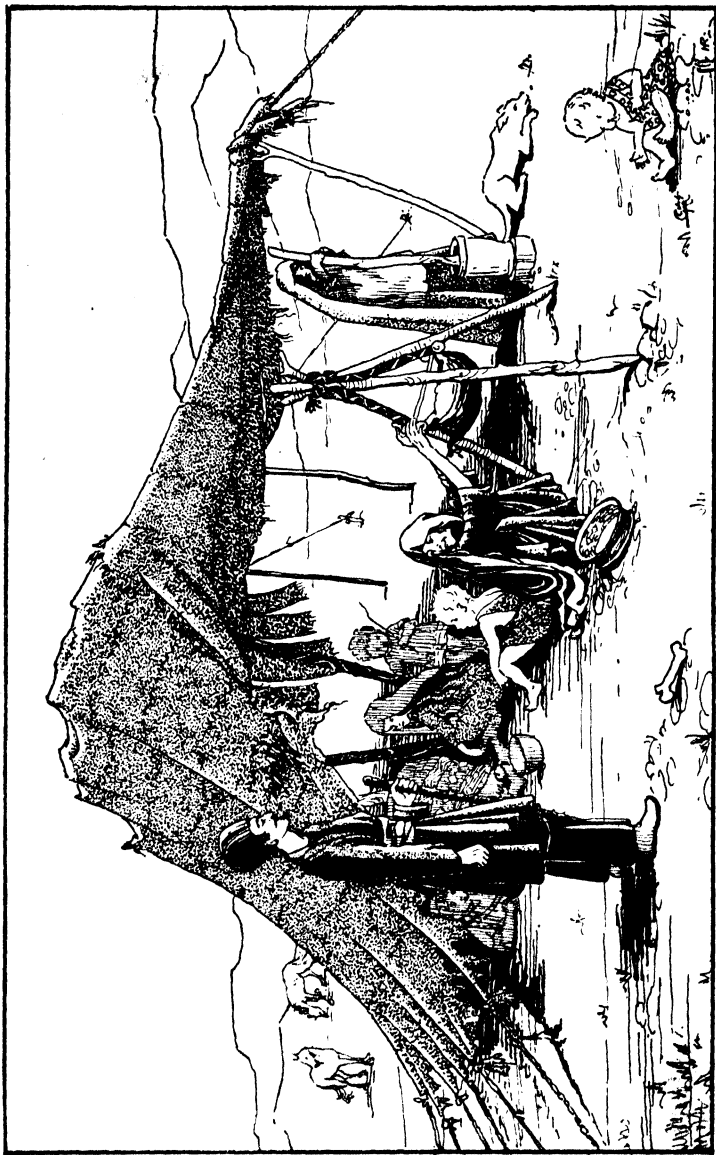
They showed him from a distance, and he saw that it was only a water-melon. A melon seed must have fallen in the middle of the cotton and had shot up, and brought forth a very large water-melon. "What will you give me if I destroy it for you?" said he.—"Whatever you like to ask." So he took a lot of money from them, and said: "Give me a bow and arrows."

He took the bow, placed the arrow on the string, and aimed at the very middle of the water-melon. The arrow made crimson juice spurt out. All the villagers fled, shouting: "The green of the cotton-thorn is all stained with blood, and now he is coming to kill us all!"

The traveller went forward and thrust his hand into the arrow hole and tore open the melon and drank some of the juice. The villagers were horrified, and cried: "What a horrible blood-drinker he is! If he stays here he will slay us!" And they came and offered him more money to go away.

While they were collecting this money for him a pedlar said he was going to another village. He had got his donkey at hand, and had loaded his merchandise on it ready to start. "Where are you thinking of going to?" asked the melon-slayer. "I want to go to such and such a village," answered he.

"A mountain pass lies in front of you."—"Yes, I know,"



“Have you nothing you could give me to drink?”

said the pedlar.—“When you reach the foot of that pass your donkey will show his teeth at you, when you have got half-way up he will bray, and when you have reached the top he will roll in the dust. As soon as he does this you will die.”

The pedlar set out as he had intended, and when he had reached the top of the pass he observed that everything had happened just as the man had prophesied, and there was the donkey rolling in the dust. He therefore lay down as if to sleep and said : “ Now I’m dead.”

He had turned the donkey loose, and after he had lain down a wolf came and tore it to pieces under his very eyes. “ Oh, you son of a burnt father !” cried he. “ If I hadn’t been dead I should never have let you eat up my donkey !”

Now the man was coming along behind him, and when he came to the top of the pass he saw the pedlar asleep, and noticed that wolves had eaten the donkey. “ Hullo,” exclaimed he, “ are you dead ?” “ Yes, certainly,” answered the pedlar. “ What will you give me to bring you to life again ?”—“ I will make you a present of whatever is left,” and with that he presented him with his saddle-bags and all his merchandise.

“ Thanks. You’re alive now. Get up !” Whereupon the pedlar rose up and went his way. Then the traveller took all the goods and descended the pass into another village, where they happened to be having a wedding.

When evening came they brought the bride to lead her to the bridal chamber. Now the doorway was low and the bride was tall, and the villagers were greatly at a loss and said : “ What shall we do ?” Some said they ought to cut off her feet and take her in ; others wanted to cut off her head, and some thought it would be best to pull down

the doorway. Then our traveller came up and asked "What will you give me if I do none of all these things and yet bring the bride into her chamber?" They gave him a great sum of money, and he stepped up to the bride and made her bend her head, and so led her in.

And now he had become the owner of much wealth and he gathered his moneys together and came to his own country to see what the news might be. When he arrived at his own house he found the two women were still quarrelling about the goat, and a heavy rain had come and all the water remained standing in the house, and a basket was floating on the top of the water. The bride, in grief for her husband, had seated herself in the basket, which was spinning round and round, while she continued weeping and saying :

" I made me a boat to ride on the foam,
I made me an anchor lest far I should roam,
But my husband, my husband, he has not come home ! "

When the husband saw and heard all this he turned away, saying : " The truth of it is, I shall not stay in this country ! " and he went again out of the city and started off into the desert and went on his own way.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXVI

THE STORY OF "ROADS" AND "SHORTCUTS"

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE were a man and a woman, both of whom were Derwishes. One day they went to Erbāb Abdullāh's house and got half a *mann* of barley, and brought it home and ground it into flour and made bread of it. It made five loaves, and of these the woman took two and a half and the man took two and a half. The man started off towards the Caravanserai of Kahnū and the woman went in some other direction.

As the Derwish was travelling along he saw another man taking a short-cut across country and coming down off the higher ground on to the road. "Father, what is your name?" asked the Derwish. "My name is Father Shortcuts," answered the stranger. "And what might yours be?" "My name," said he, "is Derwish Roads."

So Roads and Shortcuts shook hands and walked on together. Shortcuts said presently: "Father Roads, what have you got for us to eat?" "Nay, rather," answered he, "what have *you* got for us to eat?" "Not so," said

Shortcuts, "we will first eat what you've got and then we'll eat what I've got." "Very well," replied Roads, "I've only two and a half barley loaves." "Then bring them out and let's begin." On this they ate up all the bread belonging to Roads.

Presently it was Shortcuts' turn to produce something to eat, but he said: "Why, didn't I tell you my name was Shortcuts? I am often called 'Sharer' too; who ever thought *I* had bread with me?" So, having eaten all he could hope for from the Derwīsh, he went off to look after his own affairs, and once more took a short-cut across country.

The unfortunate Derwīsh travelled on his way, and at last reached the Caravanserai of Kahnū, but only to find that all the wild beasts of the desert were in the habit of coming each evening to sleep there. And he was alone. "Alas!" said he to himself, "I only hope they won't tear me to pieces to-night," and he went about searching for a place to hide.

At last he noticed a chimney and climbed up inside it. When he got up he found that it was very difficult to breathe and that he could see nothing, so with a small knife he had with him he cut two little holes in the wall for his eyes and another opposite his mouth to breathe through. Soon after nightfall he saw that, true enough, the Lion, King of Beasts, came and sat, as it were on a throne, in the middle of the Caravanserai.

Then came the Leopard, the Bear, the Boar, the Wolf, the Fox—in short, all the animals of the desert came.

The Lion turned to the Fox and said: "Honoured Lord Fox, the smell of a human being seems to come to me; look round and see where the man is. We shall kill him

for our feast to-night." The Fox searched, and returned saying : " May I be the sacrifice for the life of the Centre of the Universe ! Your Majesty, I have searched ; there is nought."

" Good," said King Lion, " then each of you must tell a story to pass the night away." Thereupon the Fox began : " May I be the sacrifice for the life of the Centre of the Universe ! Just outside this Caravanserai there is a hill, and on the hill there is a black stone, and under the black stone there is a treasure, and well it is that no human being sees it, for if one of them knew of it he would go and carry it off."

" Good," said King Lion. " Honoured Lord Leopard, pray you speak ! " " In such and such a mountain," began the Leopard, " there is a valley, and in the valley there is a spring of water, and if you go there you will come to a fig tree. Under the tree there is a treasure : jars and jars of Chosroes full of jewels of seven colours. And well it is that no human being knows of it, for if one of them heard he would go and carry it off."

" Good," said King Lion. " Honoured Wolf, speak you ! " " Sire," began the Wolf, " such and such a sheep-owner has one flock of which all the sheep are black, and among the black sheep there is one who has a white star in the middle of his forehead. With that flock there is a piebald dog. Now there is also a King whose daughter is mad. And if a human being knew of all this he would go and kill the piebald dog, and he would take the dog's brains and put them into the nose of the King's Daughter to cure her, and the King would give the man his daughter in marriage, and after the King's death the kingdom would be his."

"Good," said King Lion. "Honoured Jackal, speak you!" "There is a mouse here," said the Jackal, "who has one thousand pieces of gold. Every morning, as soon as we have left the Caravanserai and gone away, he brings his gold pieces to the door of his hole and piles them up and rolls over and over in them, and then carries them back again into his hole. Now if a human being were to come up just at that moment he would kill the mouse and carry off the thousand pieces of gold."

To make a long story short, morning came and the animals went away. The Derwīsh said to himself: "Very well, I shall not stir just yet from this spot. If it's all true about the mouse, then the rest of it will be true too." He waited in the chimney till it was near daybreak. Then, sure enough, he saw the mouse come out carrying one gold piece. "I'll have patience," thought he, "till he has brought the lot." One by one the mouse brought out his treasures, and the Derwīsh kept the tally from his spy-hole in the chimney.

As soon as the thousand was complete, he flung himself out of his hiding-place. Bang! he hurled a stone at the mouse's head, killed it, and carried off the gold pieces. Then he left the Caravanserai and followed the Fox's directions. He went up the hill and found the black stone just as the Fox had described it. He lifted the stone and dug up the ground underneath until he came to a little baby-door. He opened the wee door and saw, sure enough, seven jars of Chosroes safely shut in there, all full of gold, and on top of each a golden tray, and on each tray a golden cock.

From each jar he took one piece of gold and went out, carefully putting the stone back in its place, and directed

his steps towards the mountain according to the directions which the Leopard had given. He found the valley and the spring of water and the fig tree, and, sure enough, when he dug the ground under the fig tree there were—seven jars of Chosroës, each one full of precious stones of seven colours. He took one stone from each jar, and carefully covering the treasure up again, he travelled on.

On and on he went till he came to the place the Wolf had described, and, sure enough, there he found a whole flock which was black, and one of the black sheep had a white star on its forehead. And—yes!—there was the piebald dog too, just as the Wolf had said.

So he came up and spoke: "Well, Father Shepherd, will you sell me your dog?" "What a strangely mad man you must be!" answered the shepherd. "Why, if I sell my dog that's the end of my flock!" "Never mind," said the Derwîsh, "I know all that, but what's the price?" "This is my master's dog," went on the Shepherd; "he bought him for fifty tumāns, but he wouldn't part with him now for a hundred." "Would you take one hundred and fifty gold pieces," asked the Derwîsh, "and sell me the dog?" To this the Shepherd answered only: "Give them to me!"

So he paid over the hundred and fifty gold pieces and took the dog, saying: "All right, now kill your dog for me." "O you mad fellow," exclaimed the Shepherd, "how could I let the dog's blood be on my head?"—"If I gave you fifty pieces more?" "Well," said the Shepherd, "but whether I kill the dog or merely hand him over to you, my master when he comes will say: 'Well, what's happened to my sheep-dog?' and what answer shall I give to that?"

"Oh," said the Derwîsh, "that's easy! Say the dog

had a fight with a wolf and the wolf killed him. You and I will tear his body into little bits to show your master." "That's not at all a bad plan," said the Shepherd, and with that he went and killed the dog. When this was done the Derwīsh said: "Now, I just want his head," and taking this he departed with all speed and went to some little distance, and there took out the dog's brains.

Next he went and bought a horse and hired a servant, and set out on the journey to Yemen.¹ When he got there he saw that all round the battlements of the city human heads were stuck up, so many that you could not count them all. "What's the news of your city?" he inquired of a passer-by, "and why have these men been put to death?" "The daughter of our King is mad," answered the man, "and the King made a Proclamation saying: 'Whosoever cureth my daughter, to him I shall give her to wife, and whosoever doth not cure her, him I shall slay, and I shall hang his head on the battlements of the city.'"

When the Derwīsh heard this he said: "Go you to the King and say that I will cure his daughter." And all the bystanders said: "O foolish man, go away rather and pursue your business. Do you want to go to certain death? Many men have come seeking to cure the King's Daughter, men beside whom you are of no account, but they did not succeed, and lo, they have all been slain." To this the Derwīsh only answered: "I shall give a writing to the King saying that if I cannot cure his daughter he may cut off my head and hang it with all the others on his battlements."

At last they went and brought the news to the King that such and such a person had come, saying: "I can cure

¹ A province in the south of Arabia.

the daughter of the King." At this the King was overjoyed, and said : " Well, if he does, he does, and if he doesn't, we slay him." And the King took the writing from him, and on his part gave him one in exchange.

Then the Derwīsh gave orders that they should heat the bath continuously for three nights and three days. At the end of this time they carried the King's Daughter to the bath and shut the door. Now the Derwīsh had gone in beforehand and hidden himself. When the Princess came in she began to run from one tank to the other, till at last she was worn out and fell down and fainted. As soon as he saw that she had fainted the Derwīsh put the dog's brains into a hollow reed and placed it in the girl's nostril, then he gave a puff and the brains were blown into her nose. Immediately she came to herself and was completely cured.

When they brought the news to the King he ordered the joy drums to be beaten, and they carried the Princess with all pomp and ceremony back to her father's court. After that the King betrothed her and gave her in marriage to the Derwīsh, low-born though he was.

Some days later the King died and left no heir save this one daughter. And the people said : " The kingdom therefore belongs to his son-in-law," and so the Derwīsh took his seat on the royal throne.

One day the new King was going off to hunt, and it happened that in the desert he caught sight of Shortcuts. He was carrying a sack on his back, and was coming from across country on to the road to go into the town. When he saw the hunting-party he drew aside to take cover. The



King turned to his men and said : " Go and take that man with the sack and carry him off to my kitchen ; feed him well and care hospitably for him till I come back from hunting."

When the King's messengers went to take Shortcuts, he began to weep and say : " I have done no evil, why do you arrest me ? " But his prayers and entreaties were of no avail ; they carried him into the city and into the King's kitchen, and tended him hospitably till the hunting-party returned.

When the King came back he sent all his attendants away and summoned Shortcuts to talk privately to him. " Well, comrade, do you recognise me ? " " May I be the sacrifice for the life of the Centre of the Universe ! " cried he, making a low reverence, " I do not recognise your Majesty." " Why," said the King, " I am that companion whose barley loaves you ate ! "—" Sire, what is your name ? " " My name," answered the King, " is Roads, and yours is Shortcuts."

As soon as Shortcuts heard this he fell on the King's neck and kissed him and said : " Since we are old friends, tell me all the story of how you came from that to this, that I may learn." And the King told him everything from start to finish. Then said Shortcuts : " Well, then, I'll go too and find it all out for myself." But the King said : " You'll only go to certain death, why not remain here with me ? I have bread enough to eat and you shall share it with me."

" Nay, not so," said Shortcuts, " just as you found it all for yourself, so will I find it." And the King said : " Very well, but for to-night you will be our guest." And he kept him that night, and when morning was come he

gave him a horse and a sword and a hundred tumāns in money, and said : “ Go, but I fear you are going to your death.” And he gave him at parting all directions for finding the Caravanseraï at Kahnū.

Shortcuts went out of the city and followed the directions exactly, and came to the Caravanseraï ; he tied up his horse and went up into one of the upper rooms. There he threw down his bedding and settled himself to sleep and began to snore, thinking that when the animals came he would listen to their words. Evening came, and sure enough the Lion came and took his seat on the throne, and one by one the other wild beasts came also. The first thing they did was to eat the horse.

Then King Lion turned to the Fox and said : “ Well, Lord Fox ? ”—“ Please, your Majesty ? ”—“ I smell the smell of a human being. Tell some one to search and find him.” Thereupon the Ghoul arose and began to sniff about till she came to the upper room. She took Shortcuts on her back and brought him down. And each of the wild beasts took a bite out of his body and he died.

And from that day the proverb runs :

NO GAINS WITHOUT PAINS,

for there is no short-cut to success.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXVII

THE STORY OF THE GRATEFUL CORPSE

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a Chief of the Merchants, called Malik ut Tujjār, in the city of Chīn, who gave a hundred tumāns to his son and said : “ Go to the bāzār and trade with these.” The son went to the bāzār and saw that they had hung up a dead man at the cross-roads and were beating him with sticks. “ Tell me,” cried he, “ what evil this man had done.” “ He left a debt of a hundred tumāns,” they said, “ and we are beating him so that the passers-by will all give something, though it were but one or two qṛāns each, for his sake, till the hundred tumāns is made up, then we shall take him off and bury him.”

“ If that’s all that’s the matter,” said the lad, “ here, take these hundred tumāns of mine and leave the corpse in peace.” Therewith he gave them the money, and they took the corpse off and buried it. And the young man went home to the Malik ut Tujjār, his father, and got another hundred tumāns. With this he bought some merchandise, and loaded it upon animals to go and trade.

When they had left the town, he said to himself : “ I’ll

just see what sort of people these are in my caravan, and whether they would stand by me or not if an accident occurred." So he went up to one of his fellow-caravaners and said: "Please lend me a jug." He took the jug and left the road, pretending he was going to the water, for he wanted to see what sort of people they were and whether they would wait for him or not. He delayed a little, and looked and saw—not a bit of it!—the caravan had gone on without him and was nearly out of sight.

"Just so," said he to himself, "and some day if an accident happened to me they would never notice I wasn't with the caravan." Then he added: "I won't start this time," and he returned to the city.

After a little while he loaded up his merchandise a second time and started out with another caravan, and everything happened as before. The third time, however, when he remained behind his fellow-travellers missed him, and he saw them turn round and come back looking for him. "That's just as it should be," said he to himself, and they all started out again on their journey.

They travelled on till they reached a certain place in the evening and halted for the night. When they were preparing to eat their evening meal they saw a valiant youth coming out of the desert towards them. He came up and sat down, knee to knee, beside the son of the Malik ut Tujjār. "Master," said he, "if you are a merchant you must need a servant." "Yes," said he, "you can be my servant if you like. What work will you do?"

Now the caravan travellers had agreed together that every night they would take it in turn to act as sentry. The Youth replied: "Every night let the guarding of the caravan be left to me. I shall be sentry, and I give you my

promise that I shall bring the caravan to its journey's end in safety. Only you, on your part, must promise me one thing : whatever I may do you must say nothing, and you must not interfere with me, but behave as if you were my servants."

To this they all agreed, and the Youth joined them as the Merchant's servant and they started out together.

One fine night when he was guarding the caravan the Youth looked out all round over the desert and saw the flame of a fire leaping up very high. He seized his sword and went towards the blaze. When he reached the fire he saw that there were forty thieves there, all sitting cheek by jowl on the one carpet. He sat down, knee to knee with them, and began to eat.

"What are you doing?" asked they. "Nay," he replied, "what are you all doing, and who are you?" "We are thieves," said they. "Good, I'm a thief too," said the young champion. So they all sat together and began to converse of all manner of places and people and things. Suddenly the Youth said : "Comrades, come some evening and let's go and rob!" And they said : "Well, but what shall we rob?" "Why shouldn't we go and rob the King's Treasury when we're about it?" said he.

To this they all agreed, and they started out and walked and walked till they arrived in the city under the very walls of the King's Treasury. Then said the Youth : "I am the mightiest of you all. I'll climb up first and pull you all up after me, one by one." So he threw up an iron grappling-hook and climbed up the rope. One by one he pulled the thieves up, and as each got to the top he cut off his head and threw it down on the inside of the wall, so that those below

did not know what was happening. Last of all he pulled up their leader and slew him too.

Then he climbed down into the Treasury and arranged the forty dead thieves in a row, and their leader he put on the seat of honour in the midst of them, with his head on his breast. After this was accomplished he himself came out of the Treasury and made his way to the King's court, and found, just as he thought, that there was a lion about to climb up on the King's throne and carry him off. He smote and killed the lion and fastened his dead body to the front of the throne. Then he went up and saw, as he expected, that the King was sound asleep, and beside him were arranged food and water and his *qaliān*. He made a mark on one of the King's legs, ate a few mouthfuls of his food, drank some water, and took a few whiffs of his pipe.

Then he came quickly out and turned his face to his caravan again, and got safely back before his fellow-travellers were awake. Next day as they journeyed they found a little fort right in the middle of their road, and in the fort was an aged Dīv, who used to lie in ambush on the road and attack passing travellers. She seized their goods and slew and ate the men themselves, so that no one was able to pass that way alive.

As soon as her eyes fell on the giant youth she uttered a great cry and dashed out to slay him. But the Youth drew his sword and smote the Dīv on the top of the head and cleft her in half. Then he followed up her track and went into the fort, and found, just as he expected, that it was full of all kinds of goods and chattels, money and precious stones which no man could number. And some men were prisoners there.

He set free all the prisoners, and, locking all the doors,

took away the keys, and then returned to the camping-place of the caravan. When he got back he found all his companions still asleep. He woke them up, crying : " Get up ! Morning has come."

Now let us go back and tell of the King's city. When the King woke up, he saw that some one had been smoking his pipe and—yes !—some one had been eating his food and drinking his water. He came down from his throne and saw that a lion had been killed and fastened to the front of it. At once he summoned his Wazīr, and said : " Such and such strange things have happened." The Wazīr replied : " And I too have news for your Majesty. Such and such a thing has happened in the Treasury and forty thieves have been slain there."

" Good," said the King, " but see to it that no one makes these events known." And he warned all his attendants who knew about them, saying : " If any one speaks of these things I will have him hewn into four quarters." Then he made a Proclamation in the city : " If any man can tell the King what took place last night in the Treasury and in the Court, the King will give him the Princess, his daughter, to wife."

Then many men came and each one told a story, but none knew the true one, and after seventeen or eighteen days, when the right man had still failed to appear, the King said to his Wazīr : " What shall we do ? After all this trouble we still do not know who was the slayer of the lion and the forty thieves." Then said the Wazīr : " A strange merchant has just arrived in the city." " Go," said the King, " and bring him to me."

When the King's messengers came to fetch the son of the Malik ut Tujjār, for he it was who had just arrived, he did not want to go with them. His servant, the young

champion, however, said : " Nay, let us rather obey." And because the master had promised to listen to his servant's advice, he consented, and they went together to the King.

The King's eye fell at once on the valiant youth, and he said : " Well, boy, speak, let me hear what you saw." " I myself," answered he, " saw nothing, but this brother of mine (and here he pointed to his master) told me all about it, only I know not whether it be true or whether it be all a lie." And the King said : " Well, speak on, and let us hear what it was." Thereupon the Youth related the whole story to the King, and added : " Moreover, such and such a mark was made on one of the King's legs."

Then said the King : " What reward do you now ask for these services, the slaying of the lion and the forty thieves?" " Sire," answered the servant, " I speak not for myself but for my brother here, who performed these deeds, and I say : ' In reward for these services betroth thy daughter to me and give her to me to wife, and graciously give me also seven hundred strings of camels, with seven hundred strings of mules, together with loading-bags and ropes, pack-saddles, and muleteers, and all that is necessary.' " To this the King agreed.

First he gave the Merchant the Princess his daughter, then he collected the camels and the mules with their saddles and trappings, and made all preparations. When all was ready the Merchant took his wife and the animals and his servant, said good-bye to the King, and started off to return to his own country.

Half-way thither they came again to the Div's fort, and they collected everything which was of little weight but of great value, and loaded it upon the camels and the mules which they had brought, and travelled on towards

their city. As they drew near the valiant youth said to his master : “ Well, now, you of yourself would have had none of this wealth. All of it really comes from me ; it is good, therefore, that we divide it fairly.” And the Merchant replied : “ You speak truly, so be it ! ”

They divided everything till they came to the King’s daughter. Then said the Youth : “ The maiden we cannot divide. Now let it be thus : either take thou the King’s Daughter and I will take all the treasure, or take thou the treasure and I the King’s Daughter.” But to this the Merchant would not agree, and they began to quarrel. Then the young champion said : “ There’s nothing impossible about dividing her.” And he came and tied her to four pegs in the ground, and drew his sword and swung it round as if to cut her in half.

The Merchant was weeping so sorely from grief and fear that he could not speak. Just as the Youth was about to strike her, the maiden, in terror of being slain, cried : “ Ah ! ” and out of her mouth came a large black snake, which fled away into the desert.

Thereupon the Youth set her free and sheathed his sword, and said to the son of the Malik ut Tujjār : “ I did this only to drive the black snake out of her ; now, lo ! both the treasure and the maiden are thine, and everything is thine. God be thy keeper ! I am gone.” The Merchant called out : “ Stay, who art thou ? ” And he answered : “ I am he for whose sake you paid one hundred tumāns at the cross-roads.”

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXVIII

THE STORY OF THE PRAYING BAKER

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a certain King who went out one evening three hours after the sun had set, and having put on the garments of a derwīsh, he began begging in the bāzār, till he came to the door of a baker's shop, where he saw that the man in charge of the scales was engaged in prayer and meditation. He listened to the man's prayer, and heard him repeat over and over again : " Whatever God has willed, that is, and only that shall come to pass." Then said the King to himself : " I'll just try this fellow and see if his prayer is in earnest. If he is praying only with his lips I shall put him to death, but if he is sincere I shall give him a robe of honour."

Now he had a ring on his finger that was worth a thousand tumāns. He went to the door of the shop and gave it to the Baker and said : " Take this ring as a pledge, and give me a quarter of a *mann* of bread and put it down to my account." He took the bread, and, going back to his castle, told the Wazīr : " I did such and such a thing this evening. Now it is your business to try and get the ring back again from him somehow." " All right, I'll try," said the Wazīr.

"If you succeed," said the King, "I'll give you a large reward, and if you don't bring me the ring I'll cut off your head."

That night the Wazīr went home and took counsel with his wife, who said : "To-morrow morning send one of your servants into the town on the pretext of testing all the people's weights and scales to see that none are giving short measure in their shops. That will give you a chance to get the King's ring back out of the Baker's till." The Wazīr said : "That's a first-rate plan."

When morning came the Wazīr's messengers went to all the shops and started testing the weights till they came to the Baker's shop. Then they said to the weighman : "Go into the back of the shop and bring us the weight you have for your flour-bin ; we must see that it also is in order." As soon as he was gone to fetch the other weight they pulled out the drawer of the till and took the ring, and one of them slipped it into his mouth and hid it under his tongue. In due course they came back and brought it to the Wazīr, who gave it to the King, who put it once more on his finger.

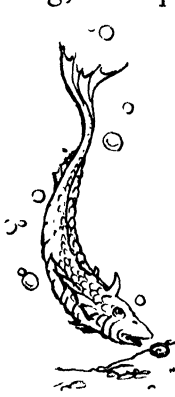
Then the King sent one of his men to fetch the Baker, and he said : "Last night I came to your shop in disguise as a derwish and I gave you a ring to keep as a pledge for a quarter of a *mann* of bread. Now take your money for the bread and give me back my ring." "The ring, your Majesty, has got lost," answered the unfortunate Baker. "My ring," said the King, "was worth two thousand tumāns. You must either give me the ring or the price of it."

The poor Baker asked for time, and the King gave him ten days' grace. Then he said : "Well, if I bring it back after ten days, there is nothing more to be said, and if not, you may cut off my head," and the King agreed.

The man went home and shut the door of his house and gave himself up to prayer and meditation. And his prayer was continually the same: "Whatever God has willed, that is, and only that shall come to pass."

Now it chanced when the eighth day had come that the King mounted his horse and took his army with him, and they rode till they came to a hunting-ground by the edge of a big stream. The King dismounted to refresh himself by washing his face and hands, and as he was doing this the ring fell off into the water. He turned to the Wazīr and said: "If the ring is found, well and good, and if not, I shall slay the Baker."

Now a fish was swimming past who gobbled down the ring, and presently a fisherman came and caught the fish.



The next day he went round the bāzār crying: "Fresh fish! fresh fish!" The poor Baker said to his wife: "See, to-morrow is the tenth day, and the King will put me to death. Let us eat a little fish to-day!" So he bought from the fisherman the very fish that had the ring in its belly.

He went into the house and gave it to his wife to cook for the evening. When she opened the fish to clean it, she saw a ring, and turned to her husband, saying: "Here is a ring; take it quickly to the King, perhaps he will accept it instead of his own." The man looked and saw that it was the very ring he had lost. He was very joyful, and on the morrow, which was the tenth day, he went and gave it to the King.

No sooner did the King see the ring than his brain reeled and he was dumb with amazement. At last he turned to

the Wazîr and said : “ It is my very ring.” Thereupon he gave the Baker a robe of honour and a large reward, and made him one of his own favourites.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXIX

THE STORY OF BALDHEAD AND THE SCANTY-BEARDS

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
God.

THERE was a bald-headed man who was the owner of a cow. His son grew up and said one day : “ Father, I want you to find a wife for me and let me get married.” “ My son,” said the father, “ I have no money, but come, take the cow into town and sell her and bring me the money, and with it I shall arrange a marriage for you with your uncle’s daughter.” The boy was greatly pleased, took the cow, and came into the town of Isfahān.

Now there were forty scanty-bearded men in the town who were very evil and mischievous, and they made it their business to cheat the unwary. As the boy arrived at the city gate with his cow, one Scanty-Beard came up and said : “ What will you sell the goat for ? ” He laughed and answered : “ What a donkey you must be if you don’t know the difference between a goat and a cow ! ” “ All right,” said the Scanty-Beard, “ then there can be no bargain between us, but if other people want to buy it from you for

thirty *shāhīs*, God be my witness, I am willing to give you thirty-five for it."

The boy took his cow further, and soon a second Scanty-Beard came up and spoke in just the same way, till seventeen or eighteen of them had come. Each of them said : "What will you sell the goat for?" At last the poor boy began to get confused himself, and to wonder whether it really was a cow or was perhaps after all only a goat. "What will you give for it?" he asked at length. "Well, since you come from the village and are a stranger to the town," said the rascal, "I am willing to oblige you and to pay five *qrāns* for your goat." A second one broke in, saying : "I'll give you six." Then a third one turned up who offered seven, and the boy took the seven *qrāns* while the Scanty-Beard carried off the cow, which he still called a goat.

Then the lad went and spent two *qrāns* in making various purchases, and then spent the remaining five in having a good meal at an eating-house, and went back to Baldhead, his father. When he got home his father's first question was : "Well, did you sell the cow?" "By the soul of your father," replied his son, "you had given me a goat instead of a cow!" "What do you mean?" asked the father. So the boy told him how the Scanty-Beards had come, one after another, and said : "That's a goat," and how everybody had said : "That's a goat"—"so I sold it for seven *qrāns* and took the money and spent it, and I brought home a kerchief for my uncle's daughter."

"Well, well," said his father, "those Scanty-Beards cheated you and made a fool of you, but never mind, I'll burn their fathers for them yet!" Now Baldhead had a donkey, and he took it and went out into the plains to his

And the wind came and shook her and blew her about, but she held tight on to her cotton, and nothing fell out of her pockets or her clothes. She climbed on up and up, and just as she got to the top the Dīv called out :

“ Black Wind, come and shake her ! ”

And the wind came and shook her, but nothing fell. Then the Dīv saw that she had taken nothing, and called out : “ Go away in safety, little girl, and may God make a moon grow on your forehead and a star on your chin ! ” And so it happened.

Carefully Little Fātima drew her muslin kerchief over her face and tied it down with her handkerchief, so that her stepmother should see nothing, and she went home out of the desert. When evening came the stepmother said : “ Go out, child, and fetch the copper spoon.” She went out into the dark, but it was so very dark that she could not see to find the spoon, so she pulled aside a tiny corner of her kerchief to get a little light from the moon and the star.

Now the other Fātima, the mullā's own daughter, knew her sister was afraid of the dark and had followed her quietly out to see what she would do, and when she saw the light she ran back to her mother crying : “ Mummy, Little Fātima has got a lamp of her own.” The stepmother peeped out and saw : yes, it was quite light in the other room. She went up close and discovered that Little Fātima had a beautiful moon on her forehead and a bright star on her chin, and she exclaimed : “ Why, child, how did you get like this ? ” Then the girl told her truthfully the whole story, but said : “ And whatever the Dīv told me to do I did it exactly.”

After this the stepmother, who had before treated her

donkey from me my days would be black indeed ! Money comes to an end, but the money which the donkey gives me has no end ; it is like a piece of land which always goes on yielding new crops." At last they succeeded in contenting Baldhead by giving him a thousand tumāns and taking the donkey.

When the bargain was concluded and the animal had changed hands, Baldhead said : " There's one condition attached : you must shut him up in a room where the wind won't blow on his body, and you must fill one manger full of sugar-candy juice and another full of *pashmak*, and into a third you must pour five *mann* of barley. Then set a large jar of water beside him and shut the door for forty days. On the fortieth day open the door and collect the gold coins he has given." And they did exactly as he had said.

On the fortieth day they went to open the door to divide the money, but it was so heavy that they could not move it. They said to themselves : " The donkey has given so much gold that the room is full and the door won't open." At last, with the greatest labour and trouble, they forced the door, and they found that the donkey had fallen down behind it dead and there were no gold coins nor anything else. He had eaten all the barley and drunk all the water, and swollen up and burst and gone to his own place. " We must burn the father of that Baldhead ! " said they.

Now listen while I tell what Baldhead had been doing. He knew that they would go on the fortieth day to their rendezvous with the donkey and would find it dead, and would then come to burn his father. So he looked about and found two baby foxes exactly the same size and colour. One he tied up outside the door of his house, the other he took out into the plains and made it fast to the side of his

little sun-shelter. Then he said to his wife : “ I have forty guests coming to-day. Make everything ready for forty—forty dishes of everything, forty *qaliāns*, forty trays, forty bowls, and when the guests have come I’ll ask you in front of them : ‘ How did you know I was going to have guests to-day ? ’ Then you must answer : ‘ The little fox brought me word who’s tied up outside. ’ ”

Some time after this the Scanty-Beards came to the village and hunted about and found Baldhead out in the plains. They went up to him in wrath, intending to burn his father, but they noticed the little fox tied up outside the shelter. They looked at each other and whispered : “ There’s some secret about that fox.” After they had greeted Baldhead with polite speeches, he said : “ Come, let’s go to my house.” “ But it’s very late,” said they, “ and there are forty of us, and we should be a burden to you.” “ Not at all,” said he, “ I’ve got a messenger I’ll send on in front to give them notice.”

With that he pulled up the peg to which the fox was chained and said to him : “ You will go to my house and say to my wife : ‘ Your husband says : “ I have forty guests with me, please make ready for us all. ” ’ ” Then he struck the fox once or twice with the chain on the back and sides and let him go, and away he bounded across the desert. When they saw this the forty Scanty-Beards took care not to breathe a word about the donkey, and they started off with Baldhead to his house.

After an hour’s walking they reached it and saw—yes ! —food and dishes and *qaliāns* and everything ready for forty guests ! And there was the fox tied up outside the house ! Their host turned to his wife and said : “ How did you know I was bringing home forty guests to-day ? ” “ Oh,”

said she, "the fox brought your message." Then the forty took counsel together, and they whispered: "That fox would be useful to us."

When they had eaten their lunch and smoked their pipes they turned to Baldhead and said: "You've never asked why we came to trouble you to-day." And he answered: "Say on." "We heard," said they, "that you had a little fox of this kind, and we came to buy it from you, for it would suit us very well. We cannot afford to keep servants, and he could do the work of a messenger." "Nay," said Baldhead, "I cannot bear to hear you speak thus. Ask any other thing of me and I will give it, and gladly, but not this." Finally, with the greatest difficulty, they persuaded Baldhead to let them have the fox for a hundred tumāns. And they hurried home, very well pleased with the bargain.

When they got to within half a *fersakh* of their home, they drew up the fox to them and hit him once or twice on the head, and said: "You will go to our house and let them know that we're coming, and tell our wives to make ready for us," and with that they set him free. When they got home they saw that nothing was ready and no message had arrived. "Didn't the fox come?" "No," answered their wives. "Oh, well, he won't have known the road, we must wait two or three days," said they; "he is sure to turn up."

When the third day had come, Baldhead said to his wife: "Fill a sheep's stomach full of blood and fasten it in front under your own dress, and I shall say to you: 'Go and bring a water-melon.' Then you must bring an unripe one. I shall cut it, and when I see that it is unripe I shall get angry and plunge my knife into your stomach. Then you

must fall down and pretend to be dead, till I put this little tube into your mouth and blow, and then you must come to life again."

On the morning of the fourth day, when the fox was still missing, the Scanty-Beards said : " We'll go and burn the father of that Baldhead, and to-day he shall not escape with his life." They came and all rushed suddenly into his house to take him by surprise, but he was sitting there expecting them. They dashed forward to strike him. " Patience, fathers," said he, " let's have a water-melon for breakfast first, then we can talk and do our business." " It won't cost us anything to eat a water-melon," whispered the one to the other, and aloud they said : " All right, bring it."

Baldhead immediately called out to his wife : " Bring a water-melon ! " She brought one after another, but they were all unripe, and her husband began to abuse her, and at last took out his knife and plunged it in her stomach. Blood poured out, the woman fell down, waved her arms, kicked her legs a little, and then died.

" For the love of God ! " cried the Scanty-Beards, " what is this you've done ! Let us fly in safety lest any one accuse us ! We'll say no more about our money." " Don't be afraid," said Baldhead, " I'll bring her back to life again presently as soon as my anger has cooled down." After a little while, when his anger had cooled, he took the little tube out of its box and blew. His wife sneezed once, got up, and sat down alive and well.

After the woman had come to life again, the Scanty-Beards came crowding round Baldhead, saying : " Sell us now this little tube and make good some of the injuries you have done us." At last, after great trouble and labour,

they persuaded him to sell them the tube for three hundred tumāns, and they went off home in great delight.

Now they all lived in one house, and each of them found some excuse that evening for quarrelling with his wife and plunging his knife in her stomach. The women fell down, kicked a little, and died. Then the husbands sat down together to smoke a *qaliān* and let their anger cool, then they took the tube from their leader and put it in the women's mouths. But blow as they might, nothing happened, and after two or three days they saw it was no use, the dead women would not come to life again.

So in each room they dug a grave and buried their wives, that no one might hear of the affair. And they said: "To-day we will go and burn Baldhead's father!" They came and burst suddenly into his house and they beat him a while, so that the noise of their blows was heard afar off. Then they threw him into a saddle-bag and fastened the mouth of it, and carried him off to take him and throw him into the Zāyanda Rūd at Isfahān.

On the way they came to a stream that crossed the road, and as they were tired they put him down in the middle of the road, while they went themselves into a shady corner to eat bread. Meanwhile a shepherd, coming along with his flocks, came up a steep bank on to the road. Baldhead guessed from the sounds that it was a shepherd driving his sheep, and he began to talk to himself very loud: "O God! O God! . . . I don't want to . . . why am I a shepherd . . .? What have I to do with a King's Daughter . . .? I am afraid . . . afraid of a King's Daughter. . . . O God!"

The shepherd, hearing these strange words, came up to him and said: "What are you saying? How can you be a shepherd? And what are you doing in a saddle-bag?"

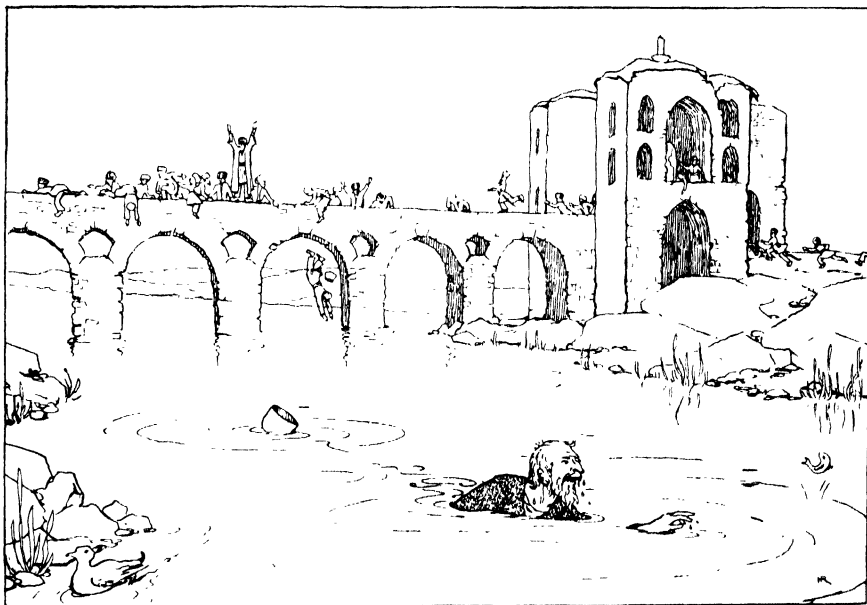
“ Yes,” said he, “ I am indeed a shepherd, to my sorrow, and the King’s Daughter has said that she wants to be a shepherd’s wife. So the King gave orders for them to go out and catch a shepherd and bring him in, and they have caught me and bound me in the saddle-bag, and they are carrying me off to give me to the King’s Daughter. And I am afraid, and I don’t want to go.”

“ What a fool of a fellow you are,” said the real shepherd. “ I only wish they were taking me in your place.” “ Well,” said Baldhead, “ open the bag quickly and get in instead of me ! ” The shepherd made haste and opened the saddle-bag, and got out of his own clothes and gave them to Baldhead and took his in exchange. Then he climbed into the bag and Baldhead fastened the neck of it very securely, and took charge of the flock and set out along the road which the Scanty-Beards would have to travel on the way to Isfahān.

Now they, when they had eaten and drunk and rested themselves, lifted up the shepherd in the saddle-bag and started off again. When they came to the banks of the Zāyanda Rūd, “ plump, plump,” they pitched him into the river and the waters carried him off and drowned him. Then they said : “ Well, it’s a good thing to have had our revenge at last on that son of a burnt father ! Now let’s go into the city.”

When they got within about half a *fersakh* of the city suddenly they see : “ Hullo, here’s old Baldhead coming along driving two or three thousand sheep in front of him ! ” “ Well, Master Baldhead, where have you been ? We have just killed you ; how did you come to life again ? ” “ By the souls of your fathers,” answered he, “ you threw me into the river, and the current caught me and carried me to the

far side, where there are shallows and the water has no great depth. There I got out of the saddle-bag and went along till I chanced to find the chief Khān of the Qashqāi giving away in charity the sheep of Hazrat 'Abbās. This much was my share ; he gave it to me, I took it and came away.



If you feel inclined to go and get some too, you should go at once, but it's the very spot where you threw me in."

"Well," said they, "what does that matter ! We'll go. If you're telling the truth and if we get plenty of sheep, we'll forgive you." "Yes, go," said Baldhead, "the Īlkhānī will be glad to see you over there. He will give you more than he gave me, for he's getting impatient to be finished with his vow."

The long and the short of it was that they went off to the bank of the river. Their leader said : " I'll jump into the water first. If it's all right, I'll wave my hand towards the water for you to follow me, but if I hold my hand up, don't come." And they said : " All right."

Then the leader stepped back, crouched down, and took a spring right into the middle of the river, and he felt the water sweep him off his feet and carry him away. Instead of holding up his hand to say " Don't come," he was so frightened of being drowned that he struck out and began to swim to try to escape. His companions thought he was signing to them to follow, and one by one they flung themselves " plop, plop," into the water. And the waters carried off every one of them and they were drowned.

Baldhead then took his sheep and went back to his village, and with the money of the Scanty-Beards he betrothed his son to his brother's daughter. And in the greatest happiness they sat down, he and his son and the young wife, to live their lives together.

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

XXX

THE SAD TALE OF THE MOUSE'S TAIL

Once upon a time there was a time
when there was no one but
GOD.

THE Mouse went out a-stealing and fell into a trap, and her tail got torn off. Away she went to the Cobbler and said :

“ Cobbler, Cobbler, sew on my tail ! ”

The Cobbler said : “ Run away and bring me some thread so that I can sew on your tail.” The Mouse ran to the Jew and said :

“ Jew, Jew, give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler to sew on my tail.”

“ Bring me an egg,” said the Jew, “ and I’ll give you a thread.” So she came to the Hen and said :

“ Tutoo, Tutoo, give me an egg
To give to the Jew, who’ll give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler to sew on my tail.”

The Hen said : “ Go and bring me a grain of corn and I’ll

give you an egg.” So she came to the Corn Heap and said :

“ Corn Heap, Corn Heap, give me a grain
To give to the Hen, who’ll give me an egg
To give to the Jew, who’ll give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler to sew on my tail.”

“ Bring me a sieve,” said the Corn Heap, “ so that I can get you a grain of corn.” So she came to the Tinker and said :

“ Gipsy, Gipsy, give me a sieve
To give to the Corn Heap, who’ll give me a grain
To give to the Hen, who’ll give me an egg
To give to the Jew, who’ll give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler to sew on my tail.”

“ Go and bring me a goat-skin,” said the Tinker, “ so that I may make a sieve¹ for you.” So she came to the Goat and said :

“ Goat, Goat, give me a skin
To give to the Tinker, who’ll make me a sieve
To give to the Corn Heap, who’ll give me a grain
To give to the Hen, who’ll give me an egg
To give to the Jew, who’ll give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler to sew on my tail.”

The Goat said : “ Go and bring me some grass, and I’ll give you a skin.” So she came to the Farmer and said :

“ Farmer, Farmer, give me some grass
To give to the Goat, who’ll give me a skin
To give to the Tinker, who’ll make me a sieve

¹ Sieves are made of fine strings of leather or gut stretched across a rough framework.

THE SAD TALE OF THE MOUSE'S TAIL 193

To give to the Corn Heap, who'll give me a grain
To give to the Hen, who'll give me an egg
To give to the Jew, who'll give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler to sew on my tail."

"Go and bring me a spade," said the Farmer, "so that I can dig you up some grass." So she came to the Blacksmith and said :

"Blacksmith, Blacksmith, give me a spade
To give to the Farmer, who'll give me some grass
To give to the Goat, who'll give me a skin
To give to the Tinker, who'll make me a sieve
To give to the Corn Heap, who'll give me a grain
To give to the Hen, who'll give me an egg
To give to the Jew, who'll give me a thread
To give to the Cobbler

TO SEW ON MY TAIL !"

And now my story has come to an end,
but the sparrow never got
home.

BAKHTIĀRĪ TALES

A BAKHTIĀRĪ'S SOLILOQUY

THE day has rung with strife and battle-cries
As on the fated caravan we fell,
And bore away their beasts and merchandise
Our robber chieftain's plunder-hoard to swell.
The day's work over and the triumph won,
By stealth or force, by valour or by guile,
Campward we turn our horse at set of sun,
And seek the peace of our black tents awhile.

The women bring us food and curdling mäst,
The firelight flickers in the cool night air,
From hand to hand the qaliān is passed,
And rest, and home, and all the world seem fair.
Then round the fire, the one with other vying—
While crouching children listen open-eyed—
We live the day again : the horse hoofs' flying,
How Akber smote and how Mir Qulī died.

Then, silence falling, day-dream phantoms rise :
The Golden Brothers and the Maid-Gazelle,
Adventure and enchantment and surprise—
The tales of old our mothers used to tell
Of Div and Peri-Snake, and magic spell—
The Sīmurgh and the bridegroom's wolfish bride,
The innocent unjustly flung to prison,
Demure Samamber veiled by Haider's side,
Fair as the Moon at full that in her pride
Says to the Sun : " Rise not, for I have risen."

XXXI

THE STORY OF THE MAGIC BIRD

THERE was once a poor man who made his living by cutting and bringing in thorn-bushes for firewood. Every day he went out and cut a load of thorns, and, putting it on his back, brought it home and sold it ; and so he earned his livelihood.

Now he had a very beautiful wife and two sons, one of whom was called Ahmad and the other Mahmad. One particular day he had gone out as usual to the mountain and cut his thorns, but when he sat down with his back to the bundle to take it on his shoulders he found that it was very heavy. Try as he might, he was quite unable to stand up with it. At last he took the sling off his neck and got on to his feet, and then he found that an egg had been placed on the top of his bundle ; but it was different from an ordinary hen's egg. He took it up and put it in his hat, saying : " It may be that God has given me a means of livelihood."

Then he went home and gave the egg to his wife, saying : " Take this away and sell it." The wife carried off the egg to the bāzār, and went to a shop and took it out and said : " I have an egg here I want to sell." The Shopkeeper took it and looked at it, and said : " This is a very superior egg. What will you sell it for ? " " I'll take whatever you like

to give me," replied the woman.—"Is a hundred tumāns a fair price?" "Don't make a fool of me," said the woman.—"All right, is two hundred tumāns a fair price?" The woman thought for a minute: "If I say: 'Give me two hundred tumāns,' I'll see whether he is only fooling me or whether he is really in earnest," so aloud she said: "All right, I'm in a hurry, give me two hundred tumāns." The man at once brought out the money, counted it, and gave it to her, and she took it up and went home. When she arrived home she said to her husband: "I have sold the egg for two hundred tumāns." "Well, my dear," said he, "see you don't tell any one. This is a special provision that God has made for us."

Next day he again went out to the mountain and he saw a very beautiful bird come and lay an egg and go away. Again he took the egg home with him, and his wife as before took it to the shop and sold it for two hundred tumāns and went her way.

Now the Shopkeeper came to know that whoever should possess the head of the bird, whatever kind of a bird it might be that laid these eggs, would become ruler of a country, and whoever should possess its liver would find a hundred tumāns under his pillow every night. So the Shopkeeper went and found an old woman, and said to her: "Old woman, I have fallen in love with the wife of old Father Thorn-gatherer. If you will make her friendly to me, I'll give you whatever you want." "All I want," said the old woman, "is as much flour and grape-syrup as I can eat every day." "Come along here, then," said he, and he gave her flour and syrup, and she ate her fill.

Then she got up and went to the house of old Father Thorn-gatherer and sat down beside his wife and said:

“O my daughter, wouldn’t it be a pity that you should waste your life living with a white-bearded old man like that?” “It’s just my bad luck,” replied the wife. “Ah, my dear,” said the old woman, “but I’ll show you a way out of it if you’ll only listen to me.” “Well, tell me,” said the wife, and she swore that she would do whatever she was told.

Then the old woman said: “I know a young man who is so much in love with you that he is quite ill. I’ll introduce him to you and make him your friend.” “Very well, do so,” said the wife.

Then the old woman came joyfully back to the shop and said: “Now give me as much flour and syrup as I can eat, and I’ll tell you something.” So the Shopkeeper gave her flour and syrup, and she ate till she could eat no more. Then she said: “I have made her quite excited about you, and she has given you an appointment to visit her there to-morrow.”

Next morning they set out together, and no sooner had the Shopkeeper arrived at the Thorn-gatherer’s house than the wife fell so violently in love with him that she almost died, and lost all control of her heart. They sat down together, and amused themselves kissing and talking and playing with each other. Soon, when the Shopkeeper saw that the woman was worse in love with him than ever, he said: “If we are to be friends, there’s a condition that must be satisfied.”—“What is it?” “Well,” said he, “it’s this: you must persuade old Father Thorn-gatherer to catch that bird and bring it home. When he has done so, you must let me know, and I’ll come and tell you what to do.” He sat on for two or three hours longer, then he got up and went back to his shop, and the wife that evening coaxed her husband to promise to try and catch the bird.

Next morning old Father Thorn-gatherer came in and said : " Well, I'm going off now to gather thorns." " That's an excellent idea," said his wife. So he picked up his knife and sling and went off to the mountain. When he got there he cut the thorn bushes and made up his bundle, and sat down to get the bundle on his back. Just as he was getting up, the bird came and lighted on the bundle and was evidently going to lay an egg. Very slowly and quietly the old man put out his hand and caught its two legs. It struggled a great deal, but he held on tight and did not let it go. Then he put the bird under his arm and went off home with it.

Now the old Thorn-gatherer sent his two sons every day to an ākhund to learn to read. When her husband brought in the bird the wife was greatly delighted, for she said to herself : " Now the Shopkeeper and I will become great friends," and she went quickly and told him. " Do you know what you must do ?" said he.—" No."—" Well, you must go and kill the bird, and you must cook an *āsh* and put the bird's head and liver in it, and let it stand till I come. Then I will do whatever you wish."

The woman then returned home, and at once cut off the bird's head, and cleaned it and put it and the liver in the *āsh*. Then she kept watching for the Shopkeeper, saying : " When will he come, so that I may get my desire ?" She saw that he was late, and she could not control her impatience, so she went out to an open space where she could see the road and watch for his coming. While she was still out the children came back from the ākhund's for dinner, and they saw the pot of *āsh* standing on the fireplace. They took off the lid and saw that there was a fowl in the pot. They ate some of the *āsh*, and Ahmad took the head to keep as a talisman and Mahmad took the liver, then they put back

which remained on the fireplace. Having had their dinner, they went off again to the ākhund, and each fastened his talisman in an amulet round his neck.

At the time of the mid-day meal the woman returned to the house with her friend. "Good," said she, "I'll bring dinner," and she went to get the pot off the fire, but saw that it had been tampered with. To herself she said: "There now, do you see, after all the trouble I've taken I've not secured my object." However, as there was nothing else to be done, she poured ghee over the dish and brought it and set it before her friend. But when he examined it and found that it contained neither the head nor the liver of the bird, he flew into a passion, and got up, saying: "You bring me only the remains of a dish of which some one else has already eaten."

"It wasn't my fault," said the woman; "the children must have come back from the ākhund's and eaten a little of it. Now I'll cook another fowl for you." "But what I want isn't here," replied the man.—"What is that?"—"The bird's head and its liver."

Now the boys came up behind the door and they heard their mother talking with a strange man, and she was begging his pardon and saying: "My children ate some of the *āsh*. I'll cook another for you," but the man wouldn't be appeased. Then the elder brother said: "Brother, this is some companion of our mother's. Don't interfere, and let me see what they say." So they stood still and listened, and the man said: "If you really wish that we should be friends, you and I, then bring your children to the house. I will give them a drug that will make them unconscious, and I will then recover the head and liver of this fowl. After that I will restore the boys to consciousness again." "On my

eyes be it !” said the mother. “ I will do exactly as ^{an}you tell me. Sit down, they will be coming in presently.”

But the elder brother heard all this and said : “ Brother, let us fly. If we don’t, they will kill us.” So they fled for their lives. Meanwhile the man sat on waiting, till at last when he saw they weren’t coming he got up and went away. The woman kept watching the road for the boys, but when they hadn’t come by supper-time she realised that they must have been listening and have taken fright and run away. Then she scratched her face and cut off her hair and cried out : “ My sons are lost ! Do you see what misfortune has fallen on my head ? The old woman deceived me. I killed the bird, and my sons have run away for good. I fell in love with a strange man, and I haven’t even got what I wanted ! ”

Now old Father Thorn-gatherer came back from wherever he had been to, and saw his wife mourning with her hair cut off and her face all scratched. “ Woman,” said he, “ whatever has happened to you ? ” “ Ashes on my head ! ” she replied, “ my sons have disappeared ! ” So the Thorn-cutter fell to weeping too, and from grief for their sons both of them became blind.

Now hear what befell the boys. They travelled along together for several days, and every night there was a hundred tumāns under the pillow of Mahmad, who had the bird’s liver round his neck. At last they came to where the road divided into two, and they saw inscribed on a stone that if any two persons both went along one road they would die, and that one of them must take the left-hand road and one the right. The one who went to the left, after many hardships, would attain his desire, and the one who went to the right would likewise secure his, but more easily. They sat

down and threw their arms round each other's neck and wept. Then said Ahmad : " O Brother, what good will come crying ? Let us get up and be off." So they rose up, and Ahmad held to the right and Mahmud to the left, and they started off on their different ways.

Wherever Mahmud spent the night a hundred tumāns turned up under his pillow. As he approached a certain village a Castle came into view, and as he went along the road he saw a number of people sitting in the midst of dust and ashes. He went up and inquired of them : " Why are you sitting like this ? " " Friend," said they, " we are all sons of a merchant and khān, and we owned great possessions. Now there is a Lady who lives in this Castle, and she takes a hundred tumāns a night to let a man spend the night in it. In this way we have spent every penny we had, and now we haven't the face to go back to our own country, nor have we anything more to give the woman. So we have no choice but to stay here."

" This is the very place for me," thought Mahmud to himself, and he went up to the Castle and said : " I have a hundred tumāns, may I stay for the night ? " " By all means," said they, and he paid the money and stayed. Now the Lady of the Castle had several slave-girls who were like herself ; no one could escape from them. One of these slave-girls came and sat down with him, and they kept each other company till morning.

When it was daylight the slave-girl said : " Be off with you," but he said : " I am going to stay here to-night too." " Very well," said she. He stayed for several nights, and the woman said to herself : " Where is he getting all this money from ? We saw that he came here without any animals or property, and now he gives us a hundred tumāns

every day. I must watch what he does." One day she watched, and saw that he put his hand under his head and brought out a hundred tumāns and handed it over. Then she understood that he must have the liver of the mountain bird as a talisman, and she came and told her mistress.

Thereupon the Lady of the Castle came and gave him some old wine with a drug in it which threw him into a deep sleep. When he was unconscious she took the amulet from him and hung it round her own neck. Then she beat him on the back of the head and turned him out, and she sent a man with him saying: "Take him and turn him out, and then come back yourself." The man did so, and Mahmad went his way.

Night overtook him, and he lay down and slept just where he was, and when morning came he found there was no hundred tumāns under his pillow nor anything else, and his amulet was gone. He pursued his way over a wide desert till he came to a flat open space, where he found three men sitting together quarrelling. He went up to them and said: "Friends, who are you, and why are you quarrelling?" "We are the sons of Malik Ahmad, merchant of Bīdābād," said they, "and we have come into our father's estate, for he himself has died. Now all the estate has been dissipated and only these three articles remain to us, and we cannot agree how to divide them peaceably." Then they asked: "Who are you?"

"I am the son of the Qāzī of a town," said he. "Excellent," replied they. "Now, Qāzī, just apportion these things for us." "Bring them here, then," said he. Now he perceived that these men were the sons of the very man who had been his mother's companion, and from whom he and Ahmad had fled.

They brought the articles, and he saw that they were a bag, a carpet, and an antimony vial. "Very good," said he, "now what is the particular virtue of each of these?" "The peculiarity of the bag," said they, "is that if you put your hand into it and pray you will find in it whatsoever you wish for; and if you sit on the carpet and say: 'O Your Majesty King Sulémān, carry me off,' it will bear you off to wheresoever you wish; and as for the antimony vial, when you paint the antimony on your eyelids, then wherever you may choose to go no one will be able to see you."

"Very good," said Mahmad, "now do you know what you must do?" "No," said they.

"Well," said he, "I have a bow and arrow here; I will shoot the arrow and you three will run after it, and whoever first brings it back will be the owner of all three articles. The brothers all agreed to this, saying: "Let them all belong to one; it will be better so." Mahmad then placed the arrow against the string of his bow and shot it with all his strength, and all three started off at full speed, each jealous of the other, and each thinking: "I must get back first and win all three things."

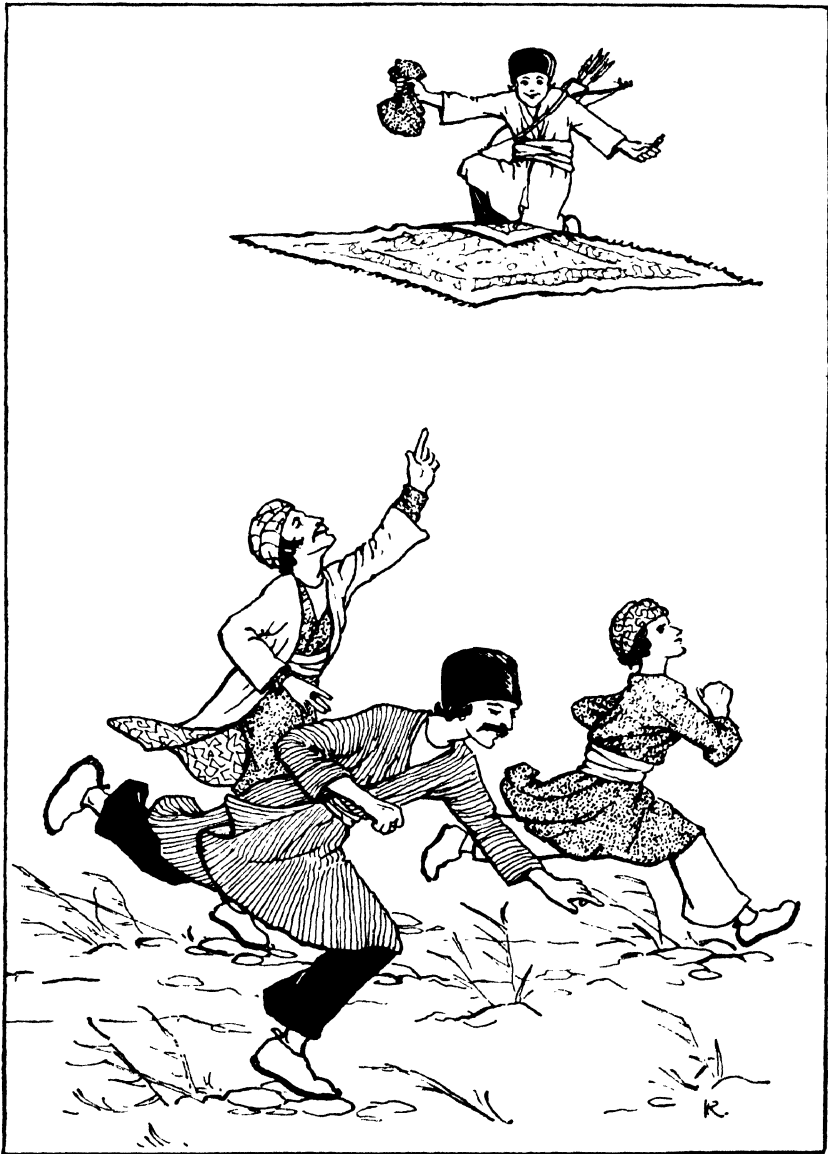
But while they ran off after the arrow, Mahmad sat down on the carpet and rose up into the air, saying: "Take me to the Castle of the Lady," and he sped away through the air. When the three brothers saw him flying off they beat their heads and said: "Now, do you see what we've gone and done? We have told the fellow the peculiar properties of the bag, the carpet, and the vial, and now he has gone off and taken them with him!" But from up in the air Mahmad shouted to them: "Don't beat yourselves! The right man has come to his rights. It was your father who forced my brother and me to flee for our lives."

Straightway he arrived at the foot of the Castle and hid away the things and went up to the gate. The Lady of the Castle saw him coming and said : " So you've come back, have you ? " " Yes," said he, " and I've brought something for you. It wasn't possible to bring it here ; we must go and look for it together." The woman's greed was awakened, so she got up and went with him, and they took their seats on the carpet. Mahmad prayed : " Take us to the foot of the Haut Tree¹ in the middle of the sea." Immediately they rose up and travelled through the air till they came to the Haur Tree in the middle of the sea ; God alone knows how many years' journey it was distant.

When the Lady of the Castle found herself beneath the tree in the middle of the ocean she said : " This is all very well, but I have nothing with me here." Mahmad promptly answered : " I'll marry you. You belong to me now." " Very good," said she, and he married her. They remained there some days, and everything they had need of they obtained from the bag.

" Well," said she, " now that I belong to you, tell me what is the special property of these things." And Mahmad so lost his common sense that he behaved like a fool and told her all about each of the things. " That's splendid," said his wife, but to herself she said : " May my woes descend on your head ! I must escape and leave you here until you die." Presently Mahmad went down a well, and took off his clothes to have a wash. As soon as he had disappeared into the well the woman sat down on the carpet and said : " Take me back to my own Castle ! " and up she went into the air.

¹ " Haur " may mean " island " ; in that case the Haur Tree would only be the " Tree in the Island."



Mahmad sat down on the carpet and rose up into the air.

Now when Mahmad looked up and saw her, he beat his head and cried out : " Why did I tell her ? " " By the soul of your father," answered his wife, " you will stay where you now are till you die, for you brought me here by craft ! " Straightway she arrived at her own Castle, but Mahmad remained behind in great distress and confusion, crying out : " O God, what am I to do ? There is no road to get away by, and there is no food here to keep me from dying," and he wept so much that he fell asleep.

He dozed for a little, and then partly woke up, and found that two pigeons had come and settled on the tree above his head. They said : " Didū, Didū,"¹ and then one of them said : " My dearest sister, do you know who this man is ? "— " No." " This is Mahmad," said the first, and then she went on and told her sister all about him, adding : " And now, do you know how things can be put right for him ? "— " No, I don't." " Well," said the first pigeon, " if he will wake up so that I can tell him what to do, and if he will act accordingly, his affairs will come right, but if he goes on sleeping he will just have to stay here till he dies."

Mahmad heard and said : " Sister, I pray you, in God's name, tell me what to do ! " " Well," said the pigeon, " do you see this tree ? "—" Yes."—" All right, you must wrap the bark of it round your feet, and you will then be able to walk over this sea, just as if you were going over dry land. Take also a twig of the tree, and if you strike any person with it and say : ' Haush ! ' ² he will turn into a donkey, and if you strike him with it again and say : ' Ādam ! ' ³ he will become a man again. Lastly, you should take some of

¹ " Didū " in the Bakhtiāri language means " sister."

² " Haush " probably means " animal."

³ " Ādam " means " man," " human being."

the leaves, and if you draw them over the eyes of a blind man he will recover his sight."

When the pigeon ceased speaking Mahmad woke up entirely, and the birds flew away, but as they went one of them said : " O man of little patience ! I know another thing, but you gave me no chance of telling it to you."

Then Mahmad went off and tore some bark from the tree and tied it round his feet, and he cut a wand and held it in his hand, and plucked some of the leaves and put them in his pocket. Then he started out over the water and found that he could walk on it just as if it were dry land. He went on and on, and found that he covered a great distance every hour, and he did not stop till he came to the Lady's Castle. There he saw her sitting over the gate and looking out.

She seemed to be in great good spirits. When she recognised Mahmad she cried : " Hullo, what trick have you played now that you have been able to come over the sea ? " " But I mustn't let him come into the house," thought she, and she called out to her servants : " Don't let this son of a dog come into the house ! " " Son of a dog yourself ! " retorted Mahmad, " I've come to burn your father."

The men about the place ran up to turn him back, but he struck them with his wand and they all turned into donkeys. Then he came up to the woman herself and struck her with the wand and said : " Haush ! " and she also turned into a donkey. Then he put saddle-bags on her, and set her to carrying earth till it was night, when he tied her up and threw down some straw in front of her : " Let us see how a person who has lived on flattery and kindness will manage to eat a handful of coarse straw left

over by other animals !” But she only hung her head, and tears streamed from her eyes.

“ Well, you won’t get off,” said Mahmad, “ until you have shown me where the liver is, and have given me back the carpet and the bag and the antimony vial.” But she continued to hang her head, for she had no language in which she could speak. “ I’m going to bring you old wine, which you must drink,” said he, and still she hung her head. Then he noticed that there was an amulet round her neck which contained the liver of the bird. So he took the talisman and hung it again round his own neck.

Then he struck her with the wand and said : “ Ādam ! ” and she became a woman again just as she was before. “ All right now,” said Mahmad ; “ come and show me where the other things are.” She told him where they were, and then they both swore not to plot against each other in the future, and they settled down to enjoy themselves together.

Now listen to a few words about Ahmad. As he went along the road to the right he came near to an inhabited place. As it chanced, the ruler of the people there had died, and they were flying a hawk to see on whom it would alight, for such was their manner of choosing a new King. But the hawk went and lighted on a wall. “ Let this traveller come up,” said the people, “ and let us see who he is.” So they made him draw near, and then they flew their hawk again. This time the hawk flew and lighted on Ahmad’s head. But the people were not minded to approve this choice, “ for,” said they, “ what do we know as to who this fellow is ? ”

Again they flew their hawk, and again it lighted on Ahmad’s head, but once more they would not accept him. When, however, it settled three times in succession on the

stranger's head, the elders of the place said : " What harm would there be in letting him be king for a time till we see in what manner he rules ? " This was agreed to, and so he settled down to rule the country, and they found that he was an excellent king, and all the people were very much pleased with him.

Now King Ahmad began to think of his brother, and he sent out a man to search for him, and at last they got trace of him. Then Mahmad and his wife, when they received Ahmad's message, packed up their things and came to him, and the two brothers threw their arms round each other's neck. Presently Mahmad said : " Brother, do send for our Mother and Father and have them brought here if they are still alive." So the King sent for them.

Now both the father and mother were blind, but blind though they were, the King's messengers brought them along. As soon as they were presented to him Ahmad said : " O Mother, what harm did we ever do that you wished to kill us ? It would be but a just punishment that you should sit on in your blindness, but because you rocked us in your arms in our babyhood we will make you well." Thereupon he took out the leaves of the tree and rubbed them on his father's and mother's eyes, and their sight was restored.

Then the mother repented of her evil deeds and said : " What a wicked thing this is that I did ! " and they all settled down to enjoy themselves for the rest of their lives.

XXXII

THE STORY OF THE TWO GOLDEN BROTHERS

ONCE upon a time there was a man called Malik Ahmad who had seven wives, but he had no children by any of them. "Here I have all this wealth," said he, "but I have no children, so what is the good of it to me?"

He was thinking thus one day when a derwīsh turned up. Malik Ahmad offered him all sorts of gifts and alms, but the Derwīsh declined to accept them. "I'm not a grabbing, take-things sort of man," said he. "I'm not a cadger. On the contrary, if any man wants a thing which I am able to bring to pass for him, I do it without reward." "Good," said Malik Ahmad, "there is a thing I want very much, and it's this: I have great wealth and I have married seven wives, but I have no children. I want a son."

"This wish of yours," replied the Derwīsh, "is easily satisfied, but there's a condition attaching to it."—"And what is the condition?" "It is this, Malik Ahmad," answered the Derwīsh, "I will give you a drug, but then any children who may come will belong half of them to me and half of them to you." Malik Ahmad agreed to this condition, for said he to himself: "Supposing children do come, I'll be able to satisfy this fellow with money or horses or mares." So they reduced the terms of their agreement to writing, and the Derwīsh put his hand in his pocket

and drew out a pomegranate, and gave it to Malik Ahmad, saying : " Give this to your youngest wife to eat."

The Derwīsh went off, and Malik Ahmad gave the pomegranate to his wife, and they ate it together. After some days she conceived, and after nine months and nine hours she gave birth to a pair of twin boys. The boys grew up till they reached the age of eighteen years. They learned to read and write, and were very strong, and there was nothing in which they were not perfect.

Now among themselves the family all said : " The Derwīsh went away, he'll never come back." One day, however, they were sitting at their ease when he suddenly made his appearance. He salāmed, and brought out the written document, and said : " I have come for my share." " Whatever wealth or property you want is yours," said Malik Ahmad, " you are welcome." " I want my share, and nothing but my share," replied the Derwīsh, and, argue as he might, Malik Ahmad could make no impression on him and had to give in.

Then the elder son said : " I will go with him," and the younger son said : " I will go." In the end the elder went, and when he was leaving he took a ring from his finger and gave it to his brother, saying : " Brother, whenever this ring gets loose on your finger and slips off and falls to the ground, you may know that I am in difficulties." So he left, and they all raised a great lamentation at his departure.

Now the Derwīsh and he went on their way till they arrived near a spring. The boy was going along behind when he saw an old greybeard standing in the road. " Oh young man," cried the greybeard, " why ever have you started out to travel with this fellow? Are you tired of life?" " He made an agreement with my father," said

the boy, "so what can I do? Show me a way out of it all!" "Pay attention to all I say then," said the old man.—"On my eyes be it!" "Very well," continued the greybeard, "you will go to the spring and he will say to you: 'My child, put your mouth down to the water and drink,' then when you have stooped down he will cut off your head with his sword. After that he will mount your horse and plunge into the water, and the horse and saddle and he himself will turn into gold. Now, when you arrive at the water's edge and he has made his polite speech to you, do you say: 'Oh no! you are my father and I am your child, I will not drink before you.' Then when he puts his mouth down to the water, smite off his head. If you don't kill him, he will kill you."

When he had finished speaking the greybeard vanished, and the lad followed on after the Derwîsh. "My child," said the Derwîsh, "why have you been so long in coming?"—"I had dismounted, and was tightening my horse's girths." They went up to the spring, and the Derwîsh said: "My child, now drink some water."—"Oh no, I could not show such disrespect before my elder and better. You are my father, drink first." And, despite all the Derwîsh's endeavours, he absolutely declined to drink first. "Well," thought the Derwîsh, "what does this boy know about it! I'll drink first, then he'll drink afterwards."

So he went and put his mouth down to the water. While he was thus stooping the lad struck him on the back of the neck with his sword and his head flew off and fell far away in the desert. Then the boy mounted the horse and struck into the blood-stained water and crossed to the other side, and he and his horse turned all into gold.

He went on till he came to a mountain on which there was

a great deal of snow, and there he was caught in a snow-storm. Now near the foot of the mountain there was a big village. The people looked out and saw a horseman caught in the snow, and they saw that he would perish if they were long in reaching him with help. So they raised a relief party, and some sturdy young men went out and succeeded in getting to him. They found that he was speechless, and they took him up on their shoulders and led his horse along, and carried him to the house of the Kadkhudā or Headman of the village. First, they took him to the baths and he recovered his warmth, and then they brought him back, and they saw that he was a marvellously fine young man, every bit of him of gold.

“Good Heavens!” said they, “is this a man or a perī?” and they asked who he was. “I am a stranger,” said he, “and I lost my way.” After he had stayed there some days the Headman said to him: “Young man, I have a very fine daughter. If you ask for her, I will give her to you to wife, and all this wealth and property will also become yours. Do stay here, for I have only this one daughter and no son.” “Very good,” said the youth, and some days later they gave him the maiden, and they two were married.

One day he said: “I am getting very bored. Give me some men with me and let me go out hunting.” “By all means,” said his father-in-law, and he placed some hunters at his disposal, and they mounted and started off for the chase. They sighted a fine striped and dappled gazelle and surrounded it, and they agreed that the one in whose direction it might go should be allowed to follow it up alone. As it chanced, it made in the direction of the golden youth, whose name, by the way, was Malik Mahmud.

It gave a leap, bounded up, and fled away. “No one

else must follow it but me ! ” cried the youth, and he galloped after it till it came to the mouth of a cave. Down it went into the cave, and after it went the youth. His companions waited and waited for him, but he didn’t come back, and they didn’t know where he had gone. “ How ever are we to answer for him to the Kadkhudā ? ” said they. However, there was nothing they could do, so after some days they returned to the village.

When the Kadkhudā found that Malik Mahmād had not come back with them, he made great lamentation and said : “ I was well pleased with this stranger, but he hasn’t remained with me.” The people said : “ He was no human being. No one knows what he was. It is true he came in the shape and likeness of a man,” and every one had something of his own to say on the subject.

Now listen to a few words about Malik Mahmād. When he entered the cave he heard a sound of stringed instruments and drums and singing. And when he arrived at the place where the sounds were coming from, he found a beautiful lady sitting there with slave-girls standing round her, their hands laid on their breasts. “ You are welcome,” said the Lady, “ come and sit down,” and he went and sat down beside her.

After the evening meal they started conversing, and the maiden said : “ What did you do with the gazelle ? ” “ I’m blessed if I know what became of it,” replied he ; “ it came into this cave, but I don’t know where it went to then.” “ O golden youth,” said the Lady, “ I myself am that gazelle. Now I have a custom and it is this, that I wrestle with every one who comes here. If you throw me to the ground, then I shall become your property, and if I throw you, you will become mine, and I will put you in

chains and tie up your horse in my stable. I have a lot of prisoners already, and I'll put you along with the rest." "Very good," said he, and they got up and started wrestling. The Lady lifted him up and flung him to the ground, knocking him senseless, and then she threw him into prison.

All of a sudden the ring on his brother's finger turned loose and slipped off and fell to the ground. "Alack and alas!" cried Sultān Mahmad, "my brother is in trouble," and he went to his father and mother and told them what had happened, and said: "I am going to find my brother." Then he mounted his horse and set out after his brother, and they all raised mourning and lamentation after him as he went.

When he came to the place near the spring he saw the greybeard, and the old man said: "O Sultān Mahmad, are you going to look for your brother?" "How does he know where I'm going?" thought Sultān Mahmad. "He must certainly know where my brother is, for it must be he who has told him my name," but aloud he only said: "Yes." Then the old man said: "Your brother is a prisoner in such and such a place. He made a wager with a lady, and she flung him to the ground and knocked him senseless, and threw him into prison. Now you will go on and cross the water, and you will turn into gold just as he did. Then when you get to the cave the Lady will wrestle with you, but you must put out your hands and catch her in such and such a way by the arms and fling her to the ground. For if you catch her thus, she will become limp and powerless."

"I'll do exactly as you say," said Sultān Mahmad, and he wished the old man good-bye and proceeded to the spring. He saw the place where the Derwīsh's blood had run into

the water, and he crossed over and turned into gold. Then he followed in his brother's tracks and came to the snow mountain, and he too was caught in a snow-storm.

Now the people of the village looked out and they saw him and said : "What a stupid fool he is ! He got caught once and we rescued him, now why has he gone and got caught again !" However, they raised a rescue party and went out and brought him in.

"My boy," said the Kadkhudā, "why ever did you go on to the mountain, so that you would get caught in the snow and the storm ? But where have you been all these days ?" "I just went somewhere," said Sultān Mahmad, who perceived that they were talking of his twin-brother. Then a beautiful lady came and sat down beside him and they talked together. Now he understood that she was his brother's wife, and at night when they lay down to sleep he drew his sword from its scabbard and laid it between himself and the woman. "Why do you do that ?" said she. "In the early days when I married you, you weren't like this." "We have a custom," he said, "to sleep like this for some days."

He stayed there a few days, and then he said : "Father, I want to go a-hunting."—"I'm afraid you may go off like the last time and be a long time in coming back." "Oh no," said Sultān Mahmad, "I'll come back soon." Some men went with him, and again the same gazelle appeared and they surrounded it. It came towards Sultān Mahmad, then it gave a leap, started aside, and bounded away, while Sultān Mahmad pursued it to the entrance of the cave. He found there was singing going on inside, and, advancing farther into the cave, he saw a beautiful lady, so beautiful that there was no one like her, sitting on a throne.

He made his salāms, and she said : “ Come and sit down.” He went and sat down by her, and she said : “ Oh golden youth.” “ Yes,” said he. “ I have a wager,” she went on, “ that whoever can throw me to the ground, I and all I possess will become his. And there is a young man just like yourself who will become yours if you win. And if I throw you I’ll send you after your brother.” “ All right,” said Sultān Mahmad, and then they got up and started wrestling. Then Sultān Mahmad put out his hands and seized her by the arms in the way the old man had shown him, and put his leg in front of hers, and threw her to the ground and tied her hands.

“ Don’t tie my hands,” said she, “ I belong to you now.” —“ I won’t agree to untie them till you show me my brother.” “ Go and get that bottle, then,” said she, “ and hold it to your brother’s nose till he recovers consciousness ; and you can do what you like with the other prisoners.” He went and took the bottle and held it to his brother’s nose, and he came to his senses, and they threw their arms round each other’s neck and wept.

Then they got up and came to the Lady and untied her hands. After that they gave themselves up to mirth and jollity, and they told each other their stories. Then morning came, and they set the prisoners free and restored them to consciousness, and they loaded up everything they cared for and went off.

The Lady too they took away with them, and Sultān Mahmad married her, and Malik Mahmad found his wife, the Kadkhudā’s daughter, waiting for him in the village, and they all went off to their own country and settled down here in peace.

The story is ended.

XXXIII

THE STORY OF AHMAD GIRDŪ AND HIS TWO BROTHERS

THERE were once three brothers, one of whom was called Nāsir, one Khōnkār, and the third Ahmad Girdū. They quarrelled and fought, and at last Ahmad Girdū got angry and went away to Arabistān. Now the Khān of that country had died, and a great number of people were gathered together to fly a hawk, for it was agreed that on whosoever's head the hawk alighted he should be their ruler.

As it chanced, the hawk lighted on the head of Ahmad Girdū. But the people turned him out of the assembly and hid him away, so that the hawk might not settle on the head of a stranger. He was put in a room, but the hawk flew in through the window and alighted on his head. Then they all decided in his favour, and said : " Fathers, it is this man's destiny. What harm will there be in letting him be ruler for one year till we see what sort of a man he is and what sort of virtue he is endowed with ? If he brings prosperity to our flocks and herds, then let him continue to be our ruler ; but if he proves evil, then we'll turn him out." So they brought him along and installed him as Governor, and they gave him a wife and built a house for him.

And so things went on, until one day Khōnkār, who was the eldest brother, said : " O Nāsir, let us go and look for

Ahmad Girdū and find where he has gone to.” They went along till they came near the village where Ahmad Girdū was, and there they saw a cowherd. They inquired from him, saying : “ We have lost track of a man, Ahmad Girdū is his name. Do you know anything of him ? ”

“ Yes, indeed,” said the cowherd. “ We have one Ahmad, Ahmad Khān is his name.” So they went to the house of Ahmad Girdū, and finding that he wasn’t in, they sat down and waited till he came. When Ahmad returned, he said to his wife : “ Look after these people till I come back.” Now Nāsir and Khōnkār saw that there was a basket of dates in the room, and they took counsel together, saying : “ Let us take it and go off with it.”

Night came, and their hosts put down bedding on the floor for them, and they lay down to sleep, but at midnight they got up and went off with the basket of dates, and they hurried along the road as quickly as they could go. Now Ahmad woke up and he saw that the basket of dates was missing, so he said : “ Wife, give me my thick stick. They have carried off the basket of dates.”

As Khōnkār and Nāsir proceeded along the road, the former went on in front, and Nāsir followed behind with the basket. When Ahmad saw this, he feigned in the darkness to be Khōnkār, and said : “ Brother Nāsir, give me the basket for a change, and go you on in front as an advanced guard,” and with that he took over the basket and went home with it.

When Khōnkār and Nāsir rejoined each other, Khōnkār said : “ Brother, what have you done with the basket ? ” “ Why, I gave it to you,” said Nāsir. “ No, by the Qur’ān,” said Khōnkār, “ it must be Ahmad Girdū who has taken it.” Then they turned back again to Ahmad’s house. Now in

the meantime Ahmad had dug a hole in the ground and put the basket in it, and he and his wife had lain down to sleep on the top of it.

Khōnkār and Nāsir crept up beside them as they slept and pushed the wife off to one side and the husband to the other, and they tore up the felt cloth they were lying on and pulled out the basket. Then they put it on their shoulders and went off along the road as hard as they could go.

Not long after, Ahmad woke up and said : " Wife, they've carried off the basket again. Give me my thick stick." Then he hurried off after them, and when he came up he found that Nāsir had gone off to a village to get a set of scales in order to divide up the dates. So Ahmad came up, pretending in the darkness to be Nāsir, and said : " I haven't been able to get anything. Supposing you were to go and were able to get some sort of a vessel, we could then divide up the dates." So Khōnkār went off to another camp, and Ahmad took up the basket and went home.

Then Khōnkār brought back one pair of scales and Nāsir brought back another, and they found that the basket had once more been carried off. After that they went on towards their home and did not turn back again.

Now as they went along they saw a golden slipper lying on the ground. They didn't know what it was, and left it lying there. They went on another three miles or so, and saw another golden slipper lying on the ground. " I'll go back for that first slipper," said Khōnkār, " so that I may take the pair to my wife." So Khōnkār turned back and Nāsir went on to his home.¹

When he got there Nāsir said to his wife : " Pull down

¹ What follows is not very clear. Some part of the story has probably been forgotten and left out.

the tent on top of me, and start wailing and keep crying out : ‘ My husband is dead ! ’ ” She pulled down the tent on top of him and started wailing. Then people collected, and they tied Nāsir on a bier. Meanwhile Khōnkār arrived on the scene, and said : “ Brother Nāsir, you may have the slippers for yourself,” but Nāsir made no reply.

They carried the body to the water-side to wash it,¹ and Khōnkār said : “ He is my brother, I will wash him.” They put down the body in water cold as ice and it began to shiver. “ Don’t die, you rascal,” said Khōnkār, “ you may have the slippers for yourself. They are just on the point of carrying you away and burying you.” Then they washed the body and wrapped it in a shroud and carried it off to the graveyard. But Khōnkār said : “ I will not put my brother under the ground,” and he sat by him alone till the morning.

Then he saw some thieves come up, and they had a lot of stolen money and began dividing it among them. All of a sudden Nāsir sprang up and said : “ Dead men seize



the living ! ” and the thieves fled in terror while the brothers pursued them some little distance. Then the two returned

¹ Muhammadans always wash dead bodies, in running water if possible, and then wrap them up in a shroud and bury them without any coffin.

to divide the money between them. One of the original thieves came back too, hoping to get a share, but Khōnkār lifted his hand and knocked off his hat and said : “ That’s your two-farthing share ! ”

Thereupon the thieves made off, while the brothers took up the money on their shoulders and went off and enjoyed it together, and rested themselves.

The story is ended.

was he?" asked the King.—"O King, he was sitting in great distress." "Ah, now I know," said the King.

Morning came, and the Hunter set out to go somewhere or other. Now the Perī King sent a messenger in the likeness of a man to watch for him on the road and say: "I have a piece of business with you." This the messenger did, and they went together to the presence of the King. "Why did you shoot off the White Snake's tail?" asked the King. Thereupon the Hunter began to weep, and said: "O King, I shot at the Black Snake, but by chance the arrow hit the White one, and so grieved am I for the White Snake that now my heart is become like roasted meat."¹

The King began to laugh, and said: "O man-born, tell me, now, whatever it may be that you would like to have as a gift." "I want no gift," replied Ādagār, "except that I may understand the speech of every created thing when it raises its voice." Now, since these people were not really snakes, but perīs who had turned into the form of snakes, whatever they willed came to pass with them.

The King then said: "Now if you saw the Black Snake, would you recognise it?" "Yes," said the Hunter. So the King gave orders and all the snakes came up. Ādagār recognised the White Snake, but the Black Snake hid itself under the others. "The Black Snake has hidden itself under the others," said the Hunter. The King then gave orders, and they brought it out and gave it over to the other snakes, who ripped open its body.

And to the Hunter he granted the power to understand the language of all created things. "Now go," said he,

¹ Persians always speak as if their hearts got *hot* when they are sorry for any one or are in love, so they say, "My heart burned" or "My heart became cabobs." Kabāb (cabob) is roasted meat.

“but tell your secret to no one, otherwise you will die.” The Hunter then took his leave and departed.

When he came to a certain place darkness overtook him, and he stopped for the night in a camp there. That night the flocks broke down the wall of their pen, made their way out, and went off to graze. There was a dog with them. The sheep fed until they were satisfied and then lay down on the hillside to sleep, while the dog returned to the camp. As he came in Ādagār heard him say to another dog : “I took the flock out and grazed them until they had had their fill, then I came back to see whether the master was asleep or not, for a black ewe has borne a pair of ewe lambs.” “You silly fool,” replied his friend, “why are you contented to suffer discomfort and take all this trouble merely for a little bit of bread?” “You shameless beast!” said the first dog, “mustn’t even this little piece of bread we get be earned?” They began to fight over this and flew at each other.

• Roused by the noise of the dogs, the master of the house got up from his sleep and found that the flock was missing. He went out to the hills and searched about as far as he could in the darkness of the night, but he could not find them, and so came back again and sat down. “Uncle,” said the Hunter, “no harm has happened to them; your flock is in such and such a place. A black ewe among them has borne a pair of ewe lambs. The black dog went with them too, and grazed them till they had eaten as much as they wanted.”

The master was greatly relieved, and when morning came he went out and brought them in. Then he said to Ādagār : “I’ll give you whatever you want.” “I want nothing,” said he, “except one of the new-born lambs.”

His host gave him one, and he branded its ear and handed it over to the people there to keep for him, and he returned to his home.

Seven or eight years later Ādagār went back to claim his ewe lamb with her offspring, and came to the camp. The sheep-owner said : " All right, take your ewe." " Very good," said the Hunter, " but how shall I know her offspring ? Give the shepherd some salt in his hand, and let him go on one side and I will lead my ewe on the other side. Then all the sheep that follow me will be mine and all that follow the shepherd will be yours."¹ The owner agreed, and he gave the salt to the shepherd and the ewe to the Hunter, and half the flock followed Ādagār.

Then he carried off his sheep, and went his way and arrived home. One of his ewes had lambed, and he was holding its head while his wife was milking it. Just then a lamb came up and said : " Give me a little milk, Mamma." " You are perfectly shameless," replied the ewe. " Can't you see that my master is holding my head and my master's wife is milking me ? Leave me alone till I'm free. When I am at liberty I'll give you all you want." Ādagār laughed. His wife adjured him, saying : " You must tell me what you are laughing at." " What affair is it of yours ?" said he. " No, no," said the woman, " you absolutely must tell me."

" If I tell you," said he, " I shall die." However, he went on : " Do you know what you must do ?"—" No."—" Well, first have four sheep killed, and cook freshly a lot

¹ The idea seems to be that the sheep would naturally follow the shepherd, especially when he had salt for them, which they like. Only those that were really the children of the ewe would follow her. The stranger Ādagār, however, was able to draw away half the sheep, probably because he knew their language. Half the flock must have been more than he was entitled to.

of rice, and collect a great deal of ghee and cook my funeral alms. After that, assemble all my relations and all your relations, and then I will tell you what I was laughing at."

The wife agreed, and collected all their relations and set the *āsh* to cook on the fire.

Now Ādagār the Hunter had a dog and a cock and a cat. The Dog put its head down on its paws and sat in dejection, but the Cock pecked at the dough and had a go on his own account at the *āsh*, but he was really only pretending not to care. The Dog looked up and said: "You are perfectly shameless; this is the funeral alms¹ of your master that is standing on the fireplace." "You're a great fool," said the Cock. "Our master is a miserable, hen-pecked creature, you stupid!"—"How?"—"I'll tell you."—"Good, say on, and let me see what you've got to say." "Well," said the Cock, "our mistress is a mischievous woman and has no sense. She asks her husband his secret, and he loves her very much and will tell her. But when he tells her he will die. As soon as ever he is dead, this wife of his will collect all the property and take it away and marry some blackguard or other, and will kick her first husband's grave. Why should any one give himself a headache over what a couple of words in black and white could set right?"

"The Cock speaks truly," said Ādagār to himself; "that is just how the matter stands," and he got up and went into the assembly. "Brothers of my wife, and my own brothers," said he, "my wife has been nagging at me in this way to tell her my secret, and if I do tell her I shall die that very instant. That being so, I have decided not to tell

¹ When a person has died, food is distributed as alms by his family to his relations and others. In Scotland it used to be the custom at funerals to entertain the guests to a big meal, presumably to cheer them up.

her, but to give her a divorce." They all said : " Very well. We certainly will not make ourselves responsible for driving you to your death. Divorce her."

Then he quickly gave instructions to a mullā and had her divorce-paper written out, and gave it to her, and she took her departure. Some time later the woman stole a hundred tumāns from her brothers and brought them as a bribe to her husband, and in the end he married her again, and they occupied themselves with their own affairs and lived at their ease.

Now just as this man attained his desire, so may you, my friends, and I attain ours !

XXXV

THE STORY OF FĀYIZ AND HIS PERĪ WIFE

THERE was a married man called Fāyiz, who was true-hearted and honest, and, moreover, a very handsome young man.

One day he went to the mountains with the flocks, and as he sat there, he played on his flute. Presently he saw a maiden come and sit down beside him, and her face was so beautiful that no one had ever seen the like. They fell in love with each other, and the girl said: "O young man, I am entirely yours; come now, and let us go to my house in the mountains." "Tell me who you are," said Fāyiz. "All in good time," answered she, "but what business is it of yours?"

Then they got up and went off together. They came to a place where there was a fine building with beautiful carpets on the floors, and there were a number of slave-girls standing about with their hands on their breasts. Fāyiz and the maiden sat down and talked to each other, and then she sent for a mullā. The mullā made his appearance, and when Fāyiz looked at him and at the girl, he saw that they were not like ordinary human beings.

"O mullā," said the maiden, "wed me to this young man on condition that he will remain faithful to me. If he does, he will be happy all his life, but if he is unfaithful,

then throughout his life he will never see me again, and he will be constantly in trouble. It is, indeed, scarcely possible that a human being should keep faith. However, we shall see how things turn out."

The mullā married them, and they settled down to disport and enjoy themselves. Some years passed thus and they had two sons, and the father perceived that they were of Perī stock. One day the wife said: "Oh man-born, if ever a day comes that you make my secret public, you will never see me again, nor your sons. So I warn you that you must not break faith." "Never while I live," protested Fāyiz, "will I betray your secret."

At last, however, came a time when a yearning for his home and his belongings took possession of him, and he could not be at peace. "O Perī," said he, "longing for my country has seized me. Give me leave now to go to my home and see what state my property is in, and have a look at those other children of mine." "O man-born," cried she, "you will go and you will regret it. For you will betray my secret, and then you will never see me again. I know this for certain, but I will not make you unhappy. All the same, you are doing wrong."

On this she recited something, and he found that they were sitting in the old place with the flocks. "Well, have you got there?" said the Perī. "Yes," said he.—"Well, you may go to your home and stay there as long as you like, only do not forget to keep my secret. If you tell it to any one, all is over between us." He said good-bye, and set off down the hill and came to his home.

His boys came out to meet him and he kissed their faces, and all his relations came to call on him. "Where have you been away to," they asked, "all these years you were

with the flock?" But he only answered: "Oh, I went somewhere." He stayed at home some days. Now the Perī was with him and was able to see him, but Fāyiz did not see her.

At last his wife worried and worried him, saying: "Do tell me where you went to, and who gave you all this wealth and property you possess." "Wife," said he, "what business is it of yours, that you ask?" "If you tell me," said she, "well and good, I swear to you that I won't tell any one else; but if you don't tell me, I'll kill myself." "I won't tell you," said he.

When the time came for him to go back to his place he said: "O wife, I am going now, you can do what you please with this wealth and property and these boys of yours." "Tell me where you're going," said she, "or I'll turn your boys adrift." He could find no way out of the difficulty, "For," said he, "if I don't tell her, she will abandon my boys and go away."

So Fāyiz acted like an ass, for God had willed that he should not again see the face of the Perī, and he told his wife the whole story. Suddenly he heard a voice saying: "O faithless man-born! All is now at an end between us. Didn't I tell you not to divulge my secret? Now you will neither see me again nor your sons." Then she took on the shape of a pigeon and flew away, and went home to her sons and settled down in peace and comfort.

But Fāyiz went to the place where he had first met her. Several days he came and went there, but he saw nothing. "No, she will not appear again," said he. Still he came every day and played on his flute and sang songs, but he saw nothing. And at night he used to sit down in a corner among some ruins and sing till morning. And he cast off

his first wife and her sons and never went to their house. In fact, he broke free from all the ties of this world, and he used continually to sing :

“ Perī, Perī, shame on me
If I an earthly wife should see,
And with her contented be,
Or cease to sigh and long for thee.”



XXXVI

THE STORY OF THE MERCHANT OF ISFAHĀN AND HIS FAITHLESS WIFE

THERE was once a man who was very rich and had much property, but he had no children except one very fine young boy. Now the daughter of a merchant came along and passed by that way. Her veil chanced to fly up and the young man's eye lighted on her. Not with one heart but with a hundred hearts he at once fell in love with the maiden, and she fell even more in love with him. The young man had hardly strength left to get home.

However, he made his way there somehow or other and said to his father : " I want to marry the daughter of Merchant So-and-so." They sent a respectable elderly man to the merchant in question to arrange for the alliance. The maiden's father gave his consent, " But," said he, " there is one condition : you must first go to Isfahān and find the merchant who has put his wife in chains and gives her the food a dog leaves over to eat, and ascertain what the reason of this is. When you have done this I will give you your wife."

The young man set out, turning his back to the city and his face to the desert. Some days passed, and he came to a certain place. There he lost his way, but went on and descried a wood. He entered the wood and lay down to

sleep at the foot of a chenār tree. After a time he noticed that a sound, "shif, shif," came from above his head, and he looked up and saw that a dragon had climbed into the tree and was making its way upwards. He saw too that there was a bird's nest in the tree, and that there were young birds in the nest.

As the dragon drew near, the young birds began to squawk, and the traveller saw that the dragon meant to eat them up. He put out his hand and his fingers met a stone ; he threw the stone at the dragon and hit it fair on the head, and it came tumbling down to the ground and died that very instant. Now every year the dragon had done this same thing : when the Simurgh built its nest, and as soon as the young ones were just able to fly, it came and ate them all up. This year too it had come as usual, but the man had prevented its fulfilling its intentions.

Having slain the dragon, the young man lay down and went to sleep. Now the Sīmurgh flew up from the mountain bringing something for her young ones to eat, and she saw a human being asleep under the chenār. She went back to the mountain again and took up a big stone on her wing to throw down on the man's head, "For," said she, "this is the creature that comes every year and carries off my young ones ; doubtless he has come again this year for the same purpose. He has come at the right moment, though, for I shall dash his brains into his mouth this very minute."

She had now arrived above the nest, and was on the point of getting above the man, for she wanted to drop the rock so that it would pass clear of her young ones and fall on the traveller's head. Suddenly the young birds understood that their mother was intending to kill the man, so they started squawking and spread out their wings over his

head, crying : “ O mother, stay your hand ! If it hadn’t been for this man the dragon would have eaten us up.” On this the Sîmurgh flew away and threw down the stone a long way off.

When she came back she first gave her young ones food, and then she spread her wings over the traveller until he had had a good sleep. Early in the afternoon he woke up, and the Sîmurgh said to him : “ O man, say whatever you want and I will give it to you, and tell me where you want to go.” “ I want to go to Isfahān,” he said.—“ Very good, but it’s a long way. Why are you going ? ”—“ I want to inquire into the matter of a merchant who keeps his wife in chains and feeds her on what a dog leaves over.”

“ Inquiry about that,” said the Sîmurgh, “ is a very difficult business. Whenever the Merchant tells any one about it he at once cuts off his head and so the inquirer never returns. I will give you instructions, however, how to proceed, and you must follow them out exactly. When you have asked your question and received your answer, the Merchant will come to cut your head off, then you must say : ‘ Permit me to go up on to the roof to pray ; when I have done that you may kill me.’ ”

“ Now in the castle is a steel gateway through which there is no road, for the door is always closed ; he will therefore give you leave to go up to pray. When you have got on to the roof, set fire to one of my feathers, and I will appear and take you on my wing and bear you home to your own town. Now climb up on to my wings.”

With that the Sîmurgh took him up, and no sooner had she risen into the air than they arrived in front of the Merchant’s castle. It was evening, and the young man knocked at the door. Some one came to the back of the door and

called out: "Who are you?"—"I am a guest." "Welcome, come in," said the Merchant, for it was he, and they went together to the men's room and sat down and conversed.

Supper-time came, and the Merchant led his guest into a room whose walls were ornamented with a mosaic of little pieces of mirror, and there were carpets on the floor and cushions and bed-coverings were laid out. A dog tied with a golden chain and clothed in silken garments came in, and the Merchant groomed it and kissed its face, and brought it to where dinner was laid ready. When the dog had eaten till it could eat no more, he wiped its mouth with a silk handkerchief, and led it away and tied it up in its own place.

Then he went to another place, which was very evil and dark, and there there was a beautiful lady, fair as the moon, which says: "Sun, rise not, for I have risen." He flung an iron chain round her neck and beat her with a switch until she came up to the food left by the dog. Then he said: "Now eat!" and having no choice, she began to eat. Then he beat her so severely that she fainted, and when she came to her senses again he took her away and tied her up in her own place.

After this he came back again to the guest in the public room, and he went himself and brought food and set it before him and said: "Partake of supper." But he said: "I will not eat." "Why not," asked the Merchant. "Tell me your story," said the young man, "if you want me to partake of your supper. Unless you do, I will not touch it."

"Man," said the Merchant, "you are young. Don't throw away your life; it would be a pity. Let this matter be. If I were to tell you about it, I should immediately cut off your head." Then he brought before him all those

he had already killed, saying : “ These I told and slew them. Now it is for you to please yourself.” “ I have said good-bye to the world,” said the young man, “ say on.”

“ O Brother,” said the Merchant, “ this woman is my uncle’s daughter and was my wife. I loved her very dearly and built this castle for her sake, that no evil should come near her. And I brought some black and white fish and put them in a tank for ornament. One day I went to the tank to bathe. I stripped at the side of the tank, and then I noticed that my wife appeared over the gateway and seemed overcome by modesty. ‘ O Cousin,’ said I, ‘ what’s the matter with you? You are my uncle’s daughter and you are my lawful wife, why are you bashful?’ ‘ O Cousin,’ said she, ‘ those fish that are in the tank, some of them are males; it is quite improper that they should be admitted to a woman’s privacy.’ ‘ All right,’ said I, and I went and threw fish-poison into the tank, and they died and the tank became fishless.

“ Now I had two horses; they were very swift, and one I called ‘ Cloud ’ and the other ‘ Wind.’ They were tied up in a stable and had a man who looked after them, and they were fed on milk, barley, sweets, and sugar-candy. I went unexpectedly into the stable, and saw that the horses were day by day getting thinner and thinner. ‘ What’s the explanation of this?’ thought I. ‘ I give them all this good food and I look after them well, and yet they are thin.’ Then I turned to the groom : ‘ My lad, why are the horses thin? It is evident that you are not giving them their food, but are taking it away and selling it.’ But he took his oath, saying : ‘ O Master, I never do such a thing as that. Just you stop riding them for ten days, and if I don’t make them fat, then cut off my ears.’—‘ But when have I ridden them?’ ‘ These

are your written orders for the horses,' replied the groom. I saw that he was telling the truth, and he went on : ' You ride Cloud one night and you ride Wind the next night.' ' All right,' said I. ' I am always riding them, but do you just look well after them.' To myself I said : ' This is the work of my wife. I must keep a watch on her and see where she goes to.'

"That night she started talking, and we drank wine together. Now every night my wife had been in the habit of putting a drug in the wine and giving it to me, and that night she put it in as usual, but I noticed what she was about, and poured the wine down inside my shirt-collar. Then I said : ' I'm getting very sleepy,' and we went and lay down to sleep. I pretended to be asleep, but I watched my wife, and saw her put on her accoutrements and take a sword in her hand, and she called out to me, meaning if I woke up to strike off my head, but if I was asleep to go off on her business.

"When she saw I was asleep, she put her hand in my pocket and took out my seal. Then she wrote an order to the groom, saying : ' Saddle the horse Wind,' and she sealed it and despatched it. The groom in due course saddled Wind and brought him round for her, and she mounted and rode off. I went quickly and saddled Cloud and followed closely on her tracks till we came to a hill. We went up it, and at the top there was a level hollow, and at the end of the hollow there was a cave, which was the abode of a Dīv, so hideous that no one could look at him. As soon as the woman arrived, she tied up her horse and went into the cave.

"Now the dog had come with me too. I thought : Perhaps she comes here through fear of the Dīv, and says

to herself : ‘ If I don’t go to him he will come at night and carry me away.’ But as soon as she got inside she poured out some wine and gave it to the Dīv. He began to drink it, and they fell to kissing and playing with each other. O Brother, then I could stand it no longer, and I shouted to him to leave off. On that the woman suddenly shrieked out : ‘ O Zingī, this is my husband, kill him ! If you don’t kill him, he will kill both of us.’

“ They charged at me, and the Dīv and I flew at each other. There were we two and my wife. They threw me down on the ground and flung themselves on me, and were proceeding at once to cut off my head, but at this moment the dog came up and seized the Dīv by the leg and drove him off me. Then I promptly smote him on the back of the neck and his head flew off, and then I seized the woman and put her in chains. ‘ O shorn-locks !’ I said to her, ‘ what wrong did I ever do to you ? Did I not show you every favour and kindness ? Did I not give you clothes and the best of food ? A dog will be faithful because of the mouthful of bread his master gives him, then why should you be faithless ? I see clearly that woman is faithless and a creature of the Devil.’

“ Then I brought her and the dog back here, and for a long time they have spent their lives in the way you see. Now this matter must not pass your lips, so come here till I cut off your head.”

“ Very good,” said the young man. “ I am no better than the others you have killed. But it is dark now and there is no road out of your castle, and in any case I am a stranger and don’t know my way about, so let me go up on to the roof and perform my ablutions for prayer. Let me first say my prayers, and then you may kill me.”

Reflecting that there was no way out of the castle, the Merchant said : " Go." Then the young man went up on to the roof and struck a light, and held the Sîmurgh's feather in the flame. Instantly the Sîmurgh appeared, and he took his seat on her wings and she rose up into the air. When the Merchant saw that the young man to whom he had told his story had made his escape, he said : " It is no longer fitting that I should live," and he drew his sword and cut off his wife's head and then the dog's head, and then he drove a dagger into his own body and all three of them died.



Now the young man arrived at the foot of the tree, sitting on the Sîmurgh's wing, and she let him down and said : " Now go your way." So he set out for his own country and arrived there safely, and told the Merchant's story. " Very good," said the girl's father, so the young man married and carried his bride away.

The story is ended.

XXXVII

THE STORY OF THE COWHERD WHO WOKE THE PRINCESS

THERE was once an old woman who had a son. He was only a cowherd, but he was very wise, clever, and intelligent. One day he said : “ Mother, go to the Kadkhudā and get his daughter for me to be my wife.” “ My child,” said she, “ you are merely a common cowherd and possess nothing in the world, how will he ever give you his daughter ? ” “ Just you go,” said he, “ the rest is no business of yours.”

So she went and came to the Kadkhudā’s house and said : “ Give your daughter in marriage to my son.” “ All right,” said he, “ I have no objection, but he must carry a letter to such and such a town and bring me the answer. When he has done that I will give him my daughter.” The mother came back and told her son. He got up and stowed some bread in the corner of his waistcloth, and, wishing her good-bye, set out on his journey.

When some months had elapsed, he arrived at a town and chanced to pass near a *chilau*-maker’s shop. When the smell of the savoury rice came to his nose his knees became quite weak, for it was some days since he had eaten anything. He stopped, and the *chilau*-maker said : “ Well, young man, what are you standing looking about for ? ” “ I got the smell of your *chilau*,” said the young man, “ and

I felt faint.”—“ Come and be my apprentice, then, and every day I’ll give you as much as you can eat.” “ Very good,” said the Cowherd, and he became apprentice to the shopkeeper and worked very hard.

The Master Cook was greatly pleased with him and grudged him nothing. So things went on, till one day some men’s heads were hung up on the top of the castle. The young man asked : “ Master, what are those men’s heads ? ” “ Our King,” said the Master Cook, “ has a daughter, if you want to know, and she has promised that if any one can wake her up three times without talking to her or putting his hand on her she will marry him, no matter who he may be. But whoever tries and fails to do so she cuts his head off.”

“ Take me and introduce me to her,” said the Cowherd, “ till I see what happens.” So he went and obtained an appointment with her. “ I shall come to-night,” said he, “ and if I wake you up you will be mine, but if I don’t wake you, then I am no better than the others, so you may kill me.” “ All right,” said the Princess.

Night came, and he took a mullā with him and went to her. They sat down and the girl went to sleep, at least she pretended to be asleep, for she was really wide awake and listening. “ O Ākhund,” said the young man, “ there were once three men who were on their way to go somewhere. Night overtook them when they were in a very dangerous place. ‘ Robbers will attack us at night,’ said they, ‘ and strip us, so let us keep watch in turn.’ Now one of the travellers was a mullā, one a carpenter, and the third was a tailor.

“ First it was the Carpenter’s turn to keep watch. He soon found himself getting sleepy, so he got up and took

an axe, and seeing a piece of wood, he hewed it into the form of a man. Then he left it where it was, and woke up the Tailor saying : ' It is your turn now.'

" The Tailor got up and took his place on watch. Presently he saw a black thing appearing, and going up to it discovered that it was a piece of wood hewn so as to look like a man, and he knew that it must be the work of the Carpenter, who wanted to give a proof of his skill. Thereupon he took his scissors and cut out a suit of clothes and dressed the wooden figure in it. Then he woke up the Mullā and said : ' Mullā, get up, it's your turn now.'

" So the Mullā got up and took his seat on watch, and he noticed that some one had made a figure of a man out of wood and clothed it. ' Ah,' said he, ' they wanted to show off their skill to me.' Then he went to the water-side and, having performed his ablutions, he began to recite his prayers. Turning his face towards the House of God, he said : ' O Lord, thou thyself knowest how these companions of mine have made a parade of their skill to me. Do not let me be put to shame, but bestow life on this lifeless figure.'

" Then from the Lord of the Universe life went out into the figure. In due course the others got up, and when day broke they saw that life had entered into the wooden figure. The Carpenter at once said : ' It is mine, for in the beginning I fashioned the wood.' ' Not so,' said the Tailor, ' for I clothed it.' ' Had it not been for me,' said the Mullā, ' it would have lain there a mere lifeless log. It was I who offered up prayers that life might enter into it. Therefore it is mine.'

" Now, Ākhund," said the Cowherd, " you are a learned man and should know. Say who is the rightful owner." " Undoubtedly the Mullā," replied the Ākhund, " for he

put life into the lifeless form.” “Not so,” said the young man, “it is the Tailor’s, for he clothed it.” Over this they started quarrelling. All of a sudden the Princess lost control of herself and broke in : “Evil befall you to talk like that ! It is the Carpenter’s, for had he not shaped the wood it would have remained lying there, just a log of firewood.”

“Very good,” said the young man, “that’s number one.” “I admit it,” said the Princess. “Give me a token, then,” said he. So she gave him a writing saying that he had won one wager. Then she lay down to sleep again.

“O Ākhund,” began the Cowherd again, “there were once two brothers, one of whom was bullying and tyrannical and the other pious and devout. The tyrannical brother went with his wife to visit the devout one. Night overtook them all in the middle of the mountains. The Bully required water and said to his brother : ‘O holy man, I want water ; come, let’s go to the stream together.’ ‘No,’ said the other, ‘I don’t want any.’ So the Bully went off alone.

“A little later, however, the pious brother found that he had need of water too, so he went off to the water-side. Now the Bully saw him coming, and thought to himself : ‘He can have remained behind for no good. He must have been up to some mischief with my property or with my wife, otherwise he would have come with me when I asked him.’ Whereupon he drew his sword without more ado, and to defend himself the pious brother drew his, and each struck off the other’s head.

“When the wife saw that two lives had been sacrificed for no reason whatever, she cried out : ‘O God, thou thyself art witness that there was no reason why this should have happened.’

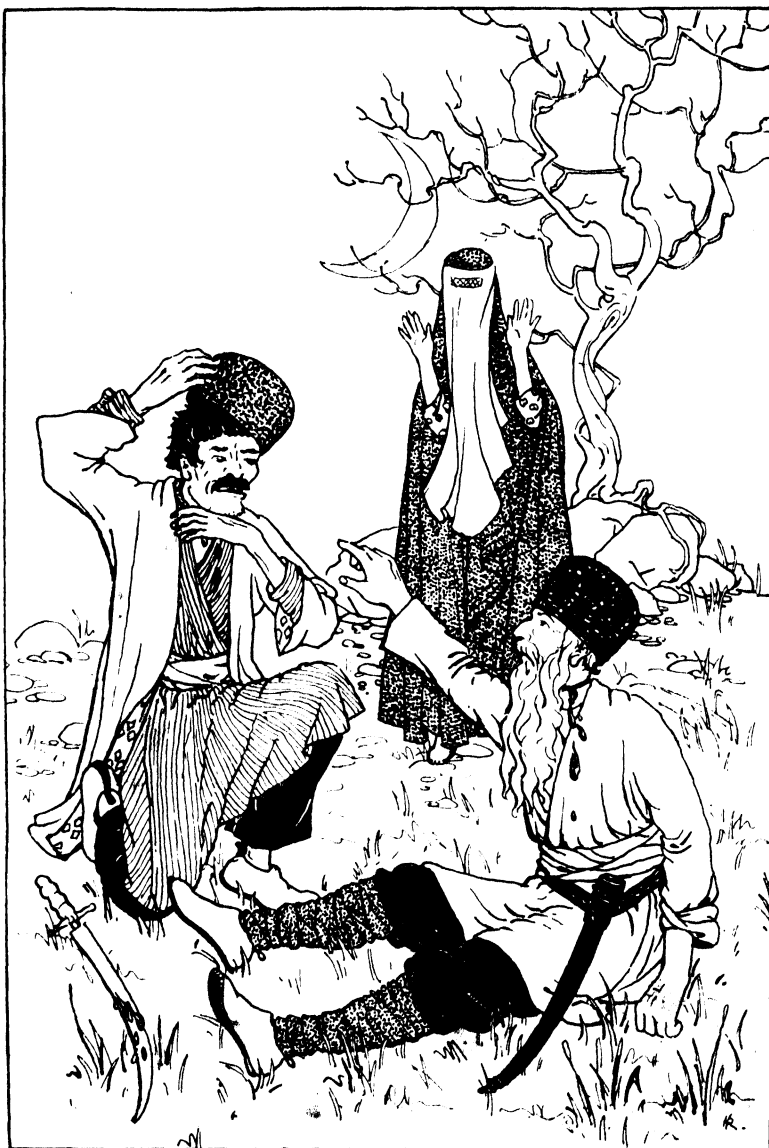
“Then she went and put the heads beside the bodies, and offered up prayers, and by God’s grace both came to life again. But by mistake in the darkness she had placed the head of the Devotee on the Bully’s shoulders and the head of the Bully on the neck of the Devotee, and they immediately began to quarrel about the woman. The Head kept saying : “The woman is mine,’ and the Body which had the Devotee’s head kept saying : ‘She is mine.’

“Now, Ākhund, you are a learned man,” said the Cowherd. “Does the wife belong to the Head or the Body ?” “She belongs to the Body,” said the Ākhund. “Not at all,” replied the young man, “you are quite wrong, she belongs to the Head.” At this the girl could contain herself no longer, and broke out : “Young man, ill befall you for what you say ! She belongs to the Body, for the head is a trifling thing ; it is a person’s body that really counts.” “All right,” said he. “That’s number two. Give it to me in writing.”

He took the writing which she gave him, and the maiden said : “I have something in a box. If you tell me what it is I shall be your lawful property, and if you cannot tell me, you will have lost, but in any case, since you have won twice, I no longer claim the right to kill you.” “Bring the box here,” said he, and she brought it and put it in his hand.

“Round things they are, round as a ball,
Pleasant to see and to taste are all,
Oranges, lemons, and pears withal,”

chanted the young man, and with that he took off the lid, and seeing that he had guessed correctly, he said : “This is number three. Give it to me in writing, and in addition to



They immediately began to quarrel.

the writing give me your necklace as a pledge, so that you may not be able to deny it later.”

He took the necklace and got up, and he and the Ākhund went off to their several abodes. In the morning the report was brought to the King that his daughter had lost. “Very good,” said he, and they celebrated the marriage, and so the young man who was only a Cowherd was given the King’s Daughter to wife, and the couple settled down to live happily together.

XXXVIII

THE STORY OF TĀLING, THE HALF-BOY

THERE WAS once a man who was very wealthy and had seven wives, but he had no children. He thought to himself : “ Here am I with all this wealth, but no children. What good is the world to me ? ” So he abandoned everything and went off.

When he had gone some way he sat down at a cross-roads, and when it was nearly sunset he saw a derwīsh approaching along the road. The newcomer spoke to him and said : “ O man, why are you sitting here on the road. Tell me what your trouble is, so that I may see what ails you.” “ What business is it of yours ? ” said the man ; “ you’ve got a road, go on along it and attend to your own affairs.” “ By the glory of the One-ness of God,” replied the Derwīsh, “ if you tell me, you tell me, but if you don’t tell me, I’ll cut off your head. Very probably I can help you to get what you want.”

“ All right,” said the other, “ I’ll tell you. I am a wealthy man, I have land and property and seven wives, but I have no children. It came into my mind that without children nothing is any good to me, so as I have now no use for all my wealth and property I have abandoned it and have come away to look for a place to live in by myself.” The Derwīsh put his hand in his pocket and took out seven apples,

"Take these," said he, "and carry them away and give them to your wives to eat, and you will become possessed of children."

The man rose up rejoicing and started off for his home, and the Derwīsh vanished from sight. When he arrived home the man divided the apples among his wives and they ate them. Now he had given one of the apples to his youngest wife, but she ate only half of it and put the other half down, intending to eat it later, but a sheep came along and ate it up.

After some months, as it chanced, all the wives had children, each one a son. Like the rest, the youngest wife also had a son, but he had only one arm and one leg, and so they gave him the name of Tāling, which means One-Leg or Half-Boy. All the other boys were fine ordinary children.



One day the eldest son made his preparations for a journey and set out in charge of a caravan. The party came to a cave, and there saw seven pots full of cooked *āsh* standing on a fireplace. They went in and sat down. Then they saw a man's beard rising out of the ground. It came up and up till there were forty yards of it and a little more,

and at last the owner of it too came up to the surface. Forty-Yards-and-One-Span-Beard was his name. "Come along," said he, "and let us wrestle. If you throw me to the ground, these seven pots will be yours, but if I throw you, then I will bind your hands and you will be my property." The eldest brother agreed to this, and they started wrestling.

The Dīv, for he was no less, picked him up and flung

him to the ground, then he tied his hands with a hair of his beard, and collected all his belongings and took them into the cave. There the eldest brother saw a beautiful lady sitting bound with chains, and they brought him in too and put him also in chains. There were many other prisoners along with them, and every day Forty-Yards-and-One-Span-Beard used to kill one of them and roast him and eat him.

One by one the five other brothers came along in the same way, and each in turn was made prisoner. Then Tāling's turn came to go out into the world. "Father," said he, "I want to go and look for my brothers." "My boy," said his father, "they had arms and legs and yet were able to do nothing. You have but one arm and one leg. Take my advice and don't go." "I must go," said Tāling, and he made his preparations for the road and went off after his brothers.

In due course he arrived at the Dīv's cave, and he saw seven pots of *āśh* standing on the fireplace. Then he saw a white beard coming up out of the ground ; there were forty yards and one span of it, and the owner of it appeared and said : " Let us wrestle. If you throw me to the ground you must cut off my head and send it rolling down hill, and wherever it may go you must follow after it. But if I throw you, then all your property will become mine, and I will bind you and tie your hands." " Very good," said Tāling, " we shall wrestle."

They got up and began to wrestle. Suddenly Tāling called on the name of God, and heaved the Dīv up and flung him to the ground. Immediately he cut off his head and sent it rolling down hill. He followed it up till he came into the cave, where he found his brothers, along with a

crowd of other prisoners. "O Brothers," said he, "how ever did you get caught?" Then he set them all free, and they dragged their loads of merchandise out into the open.

But the brothers were displeased at Tāling's having succeeded where they had failed, and took counsel together, saying : "We really cannot show ourselves anywhere after this disgrace. What are we to do? Suppose we let Tāling down into the pit where our property is, and then when we are pulling him up, cut the rope that is tied round his waist and let him fall down and be killed. Then no one will know of our disgrace."

Tāling, however, happened to be listening behind a wall while his brothers were taking counsel. "God is good," said he to himself. Then he came up to his brothers, and they said : "Go down into the pit." When he got down he passed them up the yakdāns or leather-covered chests. Finally, he got into one of the chests himself and said : "Pull this one up, and when you have secured it I will come up myself last of all." They hauled up the chest in which he was hidden, and then they pulled up the last box half way, and, in the belief that Tāling was in it, cut the rope and it fell down into the pit.

"Brothers," they all exclaimed, "that's a good piece of work we've done." Then they loaded up their loads and went off. After some days they arrived home and their mothers joyfully welcomed them, but Tāling's mother sat alone in deep grief. Their father asked : "But where, then, is Tāling?" "We haven't seen him," said they.

Then they told great stories about themselves and their adventures and what they had done, how they had killed a Dīv and how they had captured a city. "God knows,"

THE STORY OF TĀLING, THE HALF-BOY 255

said they, "where Tāling has gone to." Just then Tāling shouted out from the inside of the chest: "May God blacken your faces! I freed you from chains and you wished to throw me into a pit, the return you made for good was evil." Then the brothers were put to shame and hung their heads, but his mother cried out with pride: "It was my son who performed this wonderful deed!"

Then they gave themselves up to pleasure and enjoyment.

The story is ended.

XXXIX

THE STORY OF HOW FĀTIMA KILLED HER MOTHER AND WHAT CAME OF IT

THERE was once an old woman who was a tattooer.¹ All the women used to go to her to be tattooed, and she took food from them in payment. Now there was a man who had a daughter called Fātima, and one day the girl said to her mother : “ Mother, I’m going to get myself tattooed too.” “ All right, be off with you,” said her mother.

The girl took some flaps of bread ² with her and went with them to the tattooer. “ O old lady,” said she, “ take this bread and do some tattooing for me.”—“ Not I.” “ Why ? ” said the girl.—“ If you’ll go and kill your mother, I’ll tattoo you.” “ How am I to kill my mother ? ” asked Fātima.

“ Go home to her and say : ‘ Mother, I want a pomegranate, and I want that one that’s at the very top of the tree, and I want it from my mother’s own hand.’ ” When you and she have gone out together to pluck the pomegranate, and when your mother has climbed up to the top of the tree, then you must suddenly call out : ‘ Mother,

¹ Persian women think that tattoo marks make them more pretty, so they often have a little tattooing done on their ankles and hands and faces. They are particularly fond of having their eyebrows connected by a line. The tattooing is of a blue colour.

² In Persia bread is made in large round or oval flaps, usually about a quarter of an inch in thickness. They are like big thin brown scones, and not at all like our fat white loaves. The flaps are flexible, so that you can roll up cheese or spring onions or other food in them and stow them away in your waistcloth, as the young cowherd did in Story No. 37.

your brother's dead !' Then she will fall down and be killed."

Fātima went home to her mother as she had been told, and said : "Mother, I want a pomegranate." "Our shepherd is coming back, he will pick it for you, my child," said her mother.—"No, I want it from your own hand." "Come along, then," said her mother, "and I'll get one for you." They went off together and came into the garden, and Fātima pointed to a very big pomegranate and said : "I want that one." Her mother climbed up to the very top of the tree to get it for her, when the girl suddenly cried out : "Mother, your youngest brother's dead !" The moment she heard this, the mother threw herself down and was killed.

Fātima's father arrived on the scene a little later and saw that his wife had fallen down and been killed, and they carried her away and buried her. After that the girl went to the tattooer woman and said : "I've killed my mother, now tattoo me." "Do you know what you must do now ?" asked the old woman.—"No."—"Well, you must sprinkle salt in your clothes, and at night shake them out and say : 'O Father, what quantities of these horrible little things there are in my clothes !' If he then says : 'What can I do ?' say : 'There is an old tattooer woman, go and marry her, so that she may come and look after me.'"

Now the man loved his daughter very much and never used to cross her, so when she said : "Father, go and marry the old tattooer woman," he went and married her and brought her home. Some days later when she was in the women's quarters the girl went up to her and said : "Now tattoo me." "Go away and die !" said the old woman, "do you think I'm going to get up in my private rooms and

tattoo you ? ” — “ Well, but you asked me to kill my mother, and you promised that you would tattoo me if I did.”

Fātima wept bitterly, and went to her mother’s grave, and said : “ O Mother, the old tattooer woman deceived me and I killed you. Now she won’t tattoo me, nor does she even give me enough bread to eat. O Mother, what am I to do *now* ? ” Night fell, and she lay down to sleep. In her sleep she saw her mother come to her bed-head and say to her : “ Go to your uncle’s house and don’t take anything they offer you, but say : ‘ I want your calf.’ Then you will take the yellow calf and bring it back and tie it up. Whenever you are hungry, say : “ Yellow calf, *āsh* and *pulau* from one of your ears and rose-water from the other ! ” But take care that the old tattooer woman doesn’t find out about it.”

In the morning when she got up from sleep she went to her uncle’s house and refused everything they offered her, and said : “ I want the yellow calf.” They gave her the yellow calf, and she came back with it. “ What’s this ? ” asked the old woman. “ I have brought it from my uncle’s house,” said Fātima.

After some months the stepmother gave birth to two daughters ; one was called Chār-tē, that is, Four Eyes, and the other Chār-angila, that is, Four Stumps. These girls grew up, and their mother used to cook all the wheat-flour she could get and give it to them because they were her own children, but to the motherless Fātima she gave only barley bran.

The girl, however, used to go to the hill and give the barley bran to the yellow calf and strike it on the ear, and then everything she wanted would be forthcoming. This went on, till one day the stepmother said : “ Girl, why do

these daughters of mine who eat wheat-bread get thinner and thinner from day to day, while you who eat barley bran get every day fatter and fatter?" "I've got accustomed to it," replied Fātima.

The old woman, however, thought for a moment to herself: "I'll send Four Eyes with her in the morning and see what she does." Next morning she said: "Four Eyes, my daughter, go along with your sister." "All right," said Four Eyes. They set off together and went off to the hills, and wandered about till mid-day. Fātima was afraid to say anything, but at last she got desperate with hunger and said: "O Sister, if I tell you something, will you not tell your mother?"—"No, may my father die! I'll tell no one."

Then the girl brought up the calf and said: "Yellow calf, from one ear *āsh* and *pulau* and from the other rose-water." And they spread out a handkerchief and a sheet, which were immediately covered with food, and the sisters ate till they could eat no more.

At nightfall they set out together and returned to the camp. The mother asked Four Eyes: "Daughter, what did you see?" "Nothing, mother," replied she, "the wretched creature just ate that barley bran of hers." "Bad cess to you! You're a wicked creature," cried the mother. Next day she said: "Four Stumps, my daughter, do you go with your sister." So Four Stumps got up and went off.

They wandered about together till after mid-day, and Fātima at last began to get desperate with hunger and said: "O Sister, if I tell you something, will you not tell it to your mother?"—"No, may my father die! I will not tell my mother." Then Fātima brought up the calf, and they spread out a sheet, and as usual the calf poured out *āsh* and they ate till they could eat no more.

Now Four Stumps filled a leather bag with it and hid it, and at nightfall she came back, and when she was near the camp she called out : " Mother, spread out a horse-cloth and a saddle-cover while I come to you." The mother spread out a horse-cloth and saddle-cover, and when Four Stumps came and emptied the bag she saw that sugar and candy, *āsh* and meat were poured out. " Daughter," said she, " didn't I say that she must be eating something good with that fine complexion of hers ! "

The Stepmother then went and pretended to be ill, and said : " I am just going to die." She then dried two pieces of bread ¹ and put them on the front and back of her chest as if they were poultices, and cried : " Oh dear, oh dear, I've got fever ! " Her husband came in and said : " What's the matter with you ? " and she said : " I've got fever ; I'm just going to die."

But the day before the old woman had gone to the Ākhund and had given him a bribe of five qṛāns and said : " My husband will come to you and get my horoscope. When he does, say : ' The flesh of a yellow calf will be good for her.' " The Ākhund said : " Very good," and this arrangement was made between them, and so the matter stood.

Now the old woman kept on saying : " I have no one who takes care of me, I shall die of neglect." " What can I do ? " inquired her husband. " Go," said she, " to the Ākhund, and have prayers said for me." So the man went off to the Ākhund and said : " O Ākhund, I'll give you whatever you want, only don't let my wife die. Take the cover off your Qur'ān ² and offer up prayers for her." The

¹ Remember that the bread was in thin soft flaps. The old lady probably only heated them.

² Muhammadans consider the Qur'ān very sacred, and think it irreverent to let any

Ākhund uncovered his Qur'ān and offered up prayers, and said : " Friend, the flesh of a yellow calf is indicated for her. Now go and decide for yourself what to do."

The husband returned home and said to Fātima : " Daughter, give me your calf that I may kill it for my wife. I can't let her die." " O Father," said the girl, " you've had your beard cut off,¹ they're only fooling you. Indeed and indeed the old woman is lying. It is only from the malice she bears me that she wants to kill my calf, otherwise she isn't ill at all."

When she said this her father grew very angry, and took a stick and beat her. Then he went and brought the calf and stretched it out to cut off its head. But Fātima said : " Edge of knife like back of knife !" and for all he could do he couldn't make the knife cut. He rushed at his daughter with the stick and beat her till she cried : " Cut !" and then at last the knife cut.

Then the father skinned the calf and put it in a pot and set it on the fire, but Fātima said : " Don't cook !" and it remained on the fire for two days without getting cooked. Again her father went for her with a stick and beat her till she said : " Cook !" Then it cooked. They all ate the meat, but gave none to Fātima. She, however, collected the calf's bones and went to her mother's grave and said : " O Mother, it is I, and I've lost the yellow calf too, what am I to do *now* ? "

Then she came back and lay down to sleep. In her sleep she saw her mother come and say : " Daughter, throw

ordinary thing touch it, so they keep it in a cloth cover. They also think it very wrong to put down anything on the top of it.

¹ It is a great disgrace for a man to have his beard cut off, and it is sometimes done as a punishment. Fātima means that her father has been as much fooled and taken in as though his beard had been cut off without his even noticing it.

down some cotton-wool on the road so that the wind may blow it away, and follow wherever the cotton leads you, till you come to the door of Allā Zingī the Dīv's house. When you get there, take his head on your knee, and he will say : ' Comb my hair for me ! ' Then he will ask you : ' Is my comb better or your mother's ? ' and you must answer : ' May evil befall her ! Yours is the better. '

" Next he will ask : ' Is the string of my waterskin ¹ or your mother's the better ? ' and you must say : ' Yours is the better. ' Whatever he says, always praise *his* things. " Fātima rose from sleep, and, throwing some cotton-wool to the wind, followed it up until she came to the door of Allā Zingī's house. She said : " Salām " to him, and he replied : " O born-of-man, what do you want ? Come and sit down. " She went to him and he put his head on her knee, and in answer to everything he asked she said : " Yours is the better. " The Dīv was very much pleased, and said : " O born-of-man, I am going to sleep. While I am asleep a black cloud will come up and you won't wake me, but afterwards a white cloud will come, and then you must wake me up. " " Very good, " said she, and he went to sleep. A black cloud came and passed, and she didn't waken him, then a white cloud came up and she burst into tears, and the tears fell from her eyes on to Allā Zingī's face.

Instantly he awoke and stood up, and kissed her forehead, and said : " You are my child ; I'll give you whatever you want. " Then he set a moon on her chin and a sun on her

¹ Persians carry water in goatskins. The skin, which is called a " mashk, " is not cut open. Only the head is cut off and the legs above the knees. This leaves four holes where the legs were. These are tied up tightly, and only the hole where the neck was is left for filling and emptying the skin by. When the skin is full this is also tied up with a piece of woollen string, so that the water may not pour out when the skin is moved or laid on the ground. This is the string referred to. The leg stumps (" angila ") are connected by a sling, by which the water-skin can be hung on the shoulder.

forehead, and said : “ Now go,” and he gave her a pair of slippers studded with jewels and covered with gold, and she went off.

By chance, as she went along the road, she dropped one of her slippers. Now a King’s Son was going hunting and saw it lying there—a single slipper, embroidered and gilded and jewelled. “ Good Heavens ! ” cried he, “ if her very slipper is like this, what must she be like herself ! ” And he turned back and did not go hunting, but fell in love with the slipper.

Then he sought out an old woman and said to her : “ O old woman, find the owner of this slipper for me, and I’ll give you whatever you want.”—“ I’ll find her for you on condition that you give me as much flour and syrup as I can eat.” “ All right,” said he, and he gave her flour and syrup till she could eat no more.

When she had finished eating, she got up and wrapped herself in her *chāder*, and proceeded on her way till she came to a beautiful lady like the shining moon, who was weeping without pause. “ Daughter,” said the old woman, “ what’s the matter that you are crying so ? ”—“ I’ve lost one of my slippers.”—“ Don’t cry, my child, I’ve found your slipper ; come, and I’ll give it to you.”

Fātima was overjoyed, and the old woman saw that her face was so beautiful that God could never have created it for Himself alone.

“ Daughter,” she asked, “ where is your home ? ” “ In such and such a place,” explained the girl.



Thereupon the old woman went back to the King's Son and said : " O Prince, congratulations to you ! I have found the owner of the slipper, and such a beautiful face as hers God has never before created." The Prince then sent a man to Fātima's father to ask for her hand in marriage, and he received his consent.

For seven days and nights they held the wedding celebrations, and he carried his bride off to the ladies' apartments in his palace. Then when his eyes fell on her he saw that no one had ever beheld such a lovely face.¹ At the end of nine months, nine hours, and nine days a baby son was born to her.

Now let us go back to Four Eyes and Four Stumps. Hearing news of all that had befallen their step sister, they also made their way to the house of Allā Zingī, but when they got there and he asked them the same questions as he had asked Fātima, they gave him the opposite answers. At this the Dīw was very angry, and he pulled off two donkey's ears and fixed one on each of their foreheads, and he fixed a bull's tail on each of their chins, and in this state they had to return home.

Now it chanced one day that they went together to the water to have a swim, and it happened that the Prince's wife was bathing that day at the same place. She had taken off her clothes and plunged into the water. When she came out she sat down at the foot of a willow tree to dry herself before dressing to go home. All of a sudden Four Stumps caught her two plaits of hair from behind and tied

¹ He hadn't seen her before. A Muhammadan man is not *supposed* to see his bride's face until he has actually married her. His mother or any other woman who has arranged the marriage for him tells him of course that the girl is awfully pretty. But that can't always be quite true. The Prince was lucky ; it was rather rash to be so sure that Fātima would be as pretty as her slipper. Among the Bakhtiāris the women are not kept hidden away and do not wear veils. It would be too inconvenient.

her by them securely to the willow tree, which was situated in the middle of a forest. Then she put on her stepsister's clothes and went away.

As for poor Fātima whom she had tied to the willow tree, a tiger came out of the forest and ate her. One single drop of her blood, however, fell from the tip of his lip to the ground, and a reed sprang up from it. One day a shepherd came along and cut the reed and made it into a whistle.

Now listen to a few words about Four Stumps. She drew her *chāder* carefully over her, and pretending to be Fātima, went home to the Prince's house and into the women's apartments. There she went to the cradle of her stepsister's baby boy, but he wanted milk and she had none to give him. Night fell and the King's Son came home. Now he had found that a light appeared every night in the room with his wife, and there was no need for a lamp, but to-night there was neither this light nor any other, and his son was crying.

"Good Heavens!" said he, "what mystery is this? Wife, what game are you playing at to-night?" "Nothing at all," replied Four Stumps. Then he noticed a sound of grinding teeth going on which he could not understand. This was she chewing the donkey's ear and the bull's tail, so that people might not see her with them in the morning. The Prince was very much put out by all this, and went to his mother and said: "A misfortune has befallen me to-night, and I don't know what the secret of it is." "How is that?" said his mother.

"Every night since I was married," replied the Prince, "there has been a bright light from my wife's face, and there has been no need for a lamp. To-night there is no

light, and my baby son won't keep quiet." As nothing could be done, he slept that night with his mother.

After that Four Stumps reared the baby on cow's milk, and no one knew what had happened, though the King's Son felt that somehow his wife was not the same. Some two years later the Prince went off one day to hunt, and he saw a shepherd sitting with his flock and playing on a whistle. As he played, a voice in the whistle sang :

“ Play on, O Shepherd, sweetly play,
And tell my tale in the light of day :
My plaits were tied to a willow tree
By the sister who wished to murder me ;
And with ugly things on her forehead and chin
She has taken the place that I was in.
And a tiger came who devoured me all
Save a drop of blood that chanced to fall,
And a reed sprang up by the water-side
Whistling to all men how I died.”

On hearing these words the Prince was greatly pleased, saying to himself : “ This whistle has news of my wife.” He took it from the shepherd and played it himself, and found that it played every kind of tune, but it uttered his name now and not that of the shepherd. “ I'll take this away,” said he, “ for my little son to play with.” So he took it, and went home and gave it to his boy.

The child began to play on it, but Four Stumps understood what it was, and snatched it from the baby's hand and flung it away into an empty earthen grain jar. The Prince came in and put his hand into the jar to get it out, but the reed thrust a bunch of flowers into his hand. The little son came up, and to him also the whistle gave flowers,

but when Four Stumps came it shoved a needle into her hand.

Some nights later Fātima herself came out of the shell of the whistle inside the jar, and one night when no one was about she came out of the jar and a bright light filled the room. You would have said it was a night on which the moon was full. The King's Son happened to enter at this point and saw that it was like a moonlight night, but the moment she saw her husband Fātima sprang back into the jar. He came up and stood over the mouth of the jar and said : " Come out."

" I can't come out," said she.—" Why not ?"—" Because I have no clothes."—" Wait, then, till I bring some for you." Now Four Stumps perceived what was going on and wanted to run away, but Fātima cried out : " Lock the door so that that woman may not escape out into the open, and so that no one else may come into the house till I have put my clothes on."

They closed the door and brought a set of bright-coloured clothes for her, and she put them on and then stepped out of the jar. The Prince was amazed, and said : " This is my true wife and not that other woman there. Good ! What strange thing is this that has occurred ? " All three of them and the child with them came and sat down, and the King's Son said to his wife : " Now tell me your story, so that I may see how it has all come about. Who are you and who is this woman ? "

Then Fātima said : " First give me my baby boy into my arms again," and she took the child, and he put his arms round his mother's neck and nestled down on to her breast. Then she said : " O King, the way things fell out was this," and she told him all that had befallen her from first to last,

how she had been deceived and had killed her mother ; she told him everything in detail.

“ Now it rests with you to pass judgement on them,” she concluded. The Prince was filled with wrath. He gave orders, and they brought him two wild mules, two broken pots, and two savage dogs, and he had the two sisters, Four Eyes and Four Stumps, tied by their plaits to the tails of the mules and turned them loose. Off they went, the dogs yelping and yapping, and the pots banging and clanging, and the women wailing and shrieking, and the wild mules kicked them into little bits, and they went to Hell.

The story is ended.

XL

THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO BOUGHT THREE PIECES OF ADVICE

THERE was once a man who had a son called Malik Ibrahīm, and he also had three hundred tumāns. On the day when he was about to die he made a statement of his last wishes. "Son," he said, "it is my last wish that you should go to the Advice-Monger and buy advice from him and do whatever he tells you." Having spoken thus, he departed from this world.

After some days Malik Ibrahīm said to himself: "I must comply with the last wish of my father," so he took the three hundred tumāns and went off to the Advice-Seller. "Man," said he, "I have one hundred tumāns, and I will give them to you if you will give me a piece of advice."

Then he brought the money and paid it over, and the wise man said :

"Don't go out when there are clouds in the sky in winter-time,"

and then he said no more. "I'll give him another hundred tumāns," thought Malik Ibrahīm to himself, "and buy another piece of advice from him." Aloud he said : "I have yet another hundred tumāns. I will give them to you too."

He brought them out and paid them over, and the Advice-Monger said :

“ Whenever you see a pigeon, a hound, and a cat for sale, buy them, whatever the price, and keep them with you and take good care of them,”

and he said nothing more. Thought Malik Ibrāhīm to himself : “ Good, I’ll give him this last hundred tumāns as well,” and he brought them out and paid them over to the Advice-Seller, who said :

“ Never tell to any one the advice you have got, and never let an outside woman enter your house,”

and he said no more.

After the lapse of some time it was the winter season, and Malik Ibrāhīm arranged with some other men to travel to a certain place. Now on their road there was a difficult and dangerous mountain like the mountain of Zerda. His companions came to him and said : “ Come, let us be off.”

He made his preparations for starting, but then he thought : “ It’s all very well, but I have paid a hundred tumāns and bought a piece of advice, and I have bought three pieces of advice for three hundred tumāns,” and he looked towards the south-west and a little scrap of cloud was visible. “ O sirs,” said he, “ put off your journey to-day. We’ll start to-morrow morning.” But they said : “ The weather is fine now, if you are coming, come along and let’s be off.” “ I’m not coming now,” answered he, “ you can please yourselves.” “ Well, we’re going,” said his friends.

With that they went on their way till they came to the head of a pass. There they saw that a cloud had come up,

and the weather broke and it thundered, and a snow-storm burst on them. The unhappy travellers lost their way and perished there and then.

But Malik Ibrahīm stayed the night where he was, and when morning came the sky cleared and the air became warm and pleasant. He set out and started up the mountain, and found that all his three friends had perished in the snow-storm. He went up to them and examined them, and each of them had a hundred tumāns in his bag. He took the money and went on to the place for which he was bound.

Thus he saw that one piece of advice had been proved sound. But for it, he would have gone with the others and perished with them ; as it was, he had not only reached his journey's end in safety, but he had also recovered the expenditure he had incurred in fees to the Advice-Monger.

He remained there for some days, and one day a man turned up who had a pigeon, a hound, and a cat to sell. The advice he had bought occurred to his mind, and he asked : " Friend, what is the price ? " " Three hundred tumāns," said the owner, " neither more nor less." Other people had said : " Friend, what is the good of a hound, a pigeon, and a cat at a hundred tumāns apiece ? " and hitherto the owner had been unable to find a purchaser. Malik Ibrahīm, however, quickly paid the money and took the animals to his lodging. The bystanders all said : " This man has gone off his head ! No sensible man would pay three hundred tumāns and buy worthless advice," but he himself knew that the animals would prove useful some day.

He paid no end of attention to them, and looked after them very carefully. At last a time came when he had no money left to meet his expenses. " O God," said he, " what am I to do ? I have no friends and I do not possess a thing,

and my animals are in straits." That night, however, he had a dream and saw a ring lying about. Now the peculiarity of the ring was that by it you obtained whatever you asked for.

It was the ring of His Majesty King Sulémān. You have only to perform ablutions as before prayers and say : "O Your Majesty King Sulémān, I have such and such a desire, bring it to pass !" and forthwith it comes to pass. And the ring is wrapped up in a scrap of green cloth, and if you undo it the ring gets lost.

When he woke, Malik Ibrahīm rose and went to an old camping-ground, and saw a scrap of green cloth lying there. He picked it up and looked at it, and saw that it contained the ring, and, carrying it, he went joyfully back to his animals, and performed his ablutions, and said : "O Your Majesty King Sulémān, I want a fine house, a brick of gold, another of silver, and some leagues of cultivated ground all ready-made." That very instant they appeared.

He took the pigeon, the hound, and the cat into the house, and himself went out for a walk. All of a sudden he found himself at the foot of a castle. It was a fine and noble castle, and in it there was a maiden with a face like the moon, and some persons of high degree had come to seek her hand in marriage, but she would accept none of them.

Now she happened to be sitting in the castle looking out, and when Malik Ibrahīm looked up and saw her he lost his senses and his heart stood still. Immediately the lady veiled herself. Now he was a handsome young man this Malik Ibrahīm, and he was also very godly, obedient to the Divine will, and pure of heart, and as soon as the maiden saw him she fell in love with him.

She began to address him from the top of the castle,



and he said : " If I come and ask the King for you to be my wife, will he give you to me?" " Well," said she, " many suitors have come, but he hasn't given me to any of *them*." " I shall go to the King,"

said he ; " my refuge is with the Lord of the Universe."

Then he sought out a wise, experienced, and ready-tongued man, and said to him : " Go, my man, to the King, and seek the hand of his daughter for me." " Friend," said the man, " it's a very difficult business"; but Malik Ibrahīm gave him five hundred tumāns and enlisted his self-interest. So the man went off and presented himself before the King and said : " The son of such and such a King has come to seek your daughter in marriage."

The King, however, took it badly, and gave orders to his servants, saying : " Go and bring the man in and cut off his head." The Wazīr rose up and bowed down and kissed the ground in reverence, and said : " O King, live for ever ! Why should you cut off his head ? Why, without cause, should you put a strange young man to



death? Say rather : ' I will give her to you, but I must have from you five hundred camels with loads of jewels, and one white slave-girl and one black slave-girl and one white slave and one black slave riding on them. Produce these, and I will give her to you.' If he does produce them, we can then make up another excuse."

The messenger got up and returned to Malik Ibrāhīm with this answer, saying : " This is what they said." " Go back, then," said Malik Ibrāhīm, " and say to them : ' Be ready to receive the camels and slaves in the morning,' and say also to the King : ' But don't let your greed run away with you thinking : " This is only one man, and I can raise objections, and in the end not give him my daughter," for if you do so, by the glory of the Oneness of God, I will carry away all the soil of your land in horses' nose-bags ! ' Go and say this to him."

In the morning he performed his ablutions before prayer, and said : " O ring of His Majesty King Sulémān, furnish all that the King has demanded of me." Presently they heard the sound of jingling bells, and found that it was the five hundred camels with loads of jewels and with male and female slaves, white and black, mounted on them, which had appeared inside the castle. The news was carried to the King : " He has produced all you asked for yesterday and it is here." " Take over charge of them," said the King to his men, and they went and took off the loads.

" What do you want next?" asked Malik Ibrāhīm. " I want a small castle built of gold and silver bricks for the private apartments of my daughter," replied the King. — " Good, come here to-morrow morning and inspect it." In the morning the King sent a man, and he found the gold and silver castle duly completed.

“Right,” said the King. “Now I want five hundred horsemen all alike to come and escort your wife away.” Morning came, and they saw five hundred horsemen all alike standing ready. They mounted the King’s Daughter on a horse and brought her to the new castle, and she and Malik Ibrahīm enjoyed each other’s company.

Some time passed after this, and one day the bridegroom went off to hunt, leaving his wife sitting alone in the castle. When evening came a certain man from another country chanced to pass by the foot of the castle. He saw that it was of gold and silver, such as exists nowhere else in the world, and that there was a fair lady sitting in it whose countenance was so beautiful that the like had never before been seen.

The traveller, who was a king’s son, went on into the town and sought out an old woman. “Old woman,” said he, “induce the lady of this castle to become interested in me, so that we may meet each other.” “With all my heart, your request is a favour,” said she, and she drew her *chāder* over her head and started off for the castle. Arrived there, she entered the audience hall and went on in, and sat down beside the wife. Then she plied her with remarks on this side and on that, till she softened the lady’s heart so that she was ready to talk with the young man, but not, however, as though he were to be a friend or lover.

Just then Malik Ibrahīm came in and saw the old woman seated there, but his wife hid her away. He came and sat down and said : “O Light of my eyes, that old woman is a great magician and a great mischief-maker. Don’t let her come into the house.”—“She only came to talk to me.”—“Well, please yourself, sooner or later she’ll let you see what she really is.”

Some days came and went and the old woman said to the wife : “ Do you never ask your husband how he built this castle ? ” “ No, mother,” said she, “ I haven’t asked him.” —“ Ask him, my child, it would be well that you should know.” In the evening when Malik Ibrahīm came in he saw that his wife was put out. “ What’s the matter ? ” said he.—“ Why don’t you tell me how you built this castle ? ”

Now he forgot all about the advice he had bought, but he said : “ Don’t plague me about that. What business is it of yours ? ” “ No, but you *must* tell me,” said his wife. At last he could resist her importunity no longer, and he said : “ I have a ring,” and then he told her all about it. Again in the morning he went out to hunt, and the old woman came to the wife and said : “ Well, have you asked him, my child ? ” “ Yes,” said she, “ and the facts are these,” and she repeated all that her husband had said.

“ Good,” said the old woman, “ now get possession of the ring. Say, ‘ Give it into my hands, so that if you are late in coming back and I should require anything I may be able to ask for it.’ Absolutely insist on getting it. He loves you very much and will not refuse you.” In the evening when the husband came in he saw her sitting there quite dispirited. “ What’s the matter now ? ” said he.—“ Nothing. Only after all these years I’ve been living with you, you’ve never once trusted me so far as to let me have the ring.” —“ You couldn’t take care of it.” —“ Why couldn’t I take care of it ? ”

The long and the short of it was that he handed the ring over to her and never thought of the advice he had bought that he should on no account allow an outside woman into the house. The next day he went off again to hunt, and the old woman came and sat down and said : “ Daughter, have



Very quietly she slipped two fingers into her pocket and extracted the ring.

you got it?"—"Yes, I have." "Good," said the old woman, "I wish you no evil, my daughter. Come now, and let me wash your hair." "Very well," said the wife. Then the old woman washed her head and took it on her knees and occupied her attention with flattery, while very quietly she slipped two fingers into the girl's pocket and extracted the ring and hid it in her own pocket.

Then she said: "O Your Majesty King Sulémān, take us and the castle and the man who is in love away to his town!" Forthwith they found themselves there. Then the King's Son presented himself to Malik Ibrāhīm's wife and said: "Now you belong to me." "Very good," said she, "but there's a condition."—"What's that?"—"It is the custom in our country to mourn for forty days. Now after forty days I will do exactly what you want, and I shall be your property, but if you try to do otherwise than as I have told you, then I shall kill myself. Now you may do as you please."

"I will go hunting till the forty days come to an end," said he.

Now listen to a few words about Malik Ibrāhīm. When he came back from hunting he saw that there was no castle nor anything else. Then he remembered the advice he had bought. "Good," said he, "now see what I've gone and done! I allowed that outside woman into my house." Then he set out across the open desert and came to the side of a lake. He took his seat in a boat and crossed over and went on till he gradually arrived in the outskirts of a town, and in it he saw and recognised his gold and silver castle.

The gate, however, was closed and guarded by watchmen and doorkeepers, for the King's Son had gone off to hunt, and had given orders that no one was to be allowed

to approach the castle till he returned in forty days from his hunting expedition. Now the [redacted] woman kept constantly coming in, and had become the confidential companion of Malik Ibrahīm's wife in her private apartments. The poor girl kept weeping day and night, and the [redacted] woman sought to comfort her. "O old woman," said she, "you try to comfort me because you have taken all my business out of my life."

Now listen to a couple of words about the [redacted] hound, and the pigeon. They said among themselves: "Our master paid three hundred tumāns and bought us that [redacted] might be of service to him in time of difficulty. If we are of use to him to-day, when shall we be?" Thereupon the pigeon flew off and the hound and the cat started out along the road. They went on walking till they came to the edge of the water; there the pigeon said: "I'll fly on," and the cat and the dog remained behind, but the dog said: "Come, get up on my back and let us go on too." The cat mounted on his back, and so they crossed over to the other side, while the pigeon flew over.

When they had gone on some leagues the pigeon saw the gold and silver castle glittering in the distance. "O brothers," he cried, "I have sighted the castle." They were filled with delight, and continued on their way. When they arrived near the castle the pigeon flew up and lighted on the top of it, and the cat and the hound entered by a water-channel. The lady looked round and saw them and was greatly delighted. "How ever have they come here?" said she to herself, and she showed them every sort of care and attention, till a day or so later they said: "Come, let us go and find our master."

They went and found him, and he wrote a letter and

tied it round the cat's neck. He wrote : " I have come and have been here many days. What can I do ? " " God is kind," said he to the cat, " He will provide a way."

Thirty-nine days passed and the next day would be the last of the month. On the morrow his wife and the King's Son were to be married. The King's Son arrived back from his journey, and they made the preparations. The wedding was arranged that they should take the lady to the women's quarters. Now Malik Ibrahim was there all the time, but he was afraid to say anything if he were to show himself they would kill him. The cat went off and caught the King of the Mice. He told him to get the ring, saying : " I require from you the ring which is in the old woman's pocket." The cat went off and opened and turned out every little bundle and ends that the miserable old woman possessed. At last a thin little mouse found the ring. He carried it off and brought it to the cat, saying : " I have found the ring."

The cat was much pleased, and went and put it into the hand of Malik Ibrahim's wife. She was sitting in deep grief, saying : " O God, do Thou provide a means ! " when she noticed that the cat had come and was scratching her hand. At first she was annoyed, but then she said : " Perhaps she has some purpose," so she caught her paw and the cat placed the ring in her hand. In great joy she got up and dressed herself in bright-coloured clothes and went to the bath.

Meanwhile the old woman went off and brought the news to the King's Son, saying : " I have brought her into a good temper. I have made her very ardent, and you may be quite happy in your mind about her."



“How ever have they come here?”

When the sun was just setting Malik Ibrāhīm's wife wrote him a letter, saying : " This is how the matter stands. Come now, and wait in some corner, and enter the castle under cover of darkness. The cat will come and let you know." When he had received the letter, Malik Ibrāhīm and the cat came along together and took their stand in a corner in the dark, for the women were passing backwards and forwards, and no men were allowed to enter the castle.

In the meantime the King's Son and the old woman had forgathered. " Old woman," said he.—" Yes."—" Arrange for privacy, I have something to do now." She turned out every one she could see, but said to him : " You yourself may stay," and she brought him to the women's quarters.

Now Malik Ibrāhīm was saying to himself : " My wife is fooling me, she wishes I should see her disloyalty with my own eyes, and in reality it is the King's Son she is going to receive. When once he comes the matter will be past praying for. What good will I get out of it all ?" Presently the King's Son came into her presence and sat down. The wife said : " Sit down till I say my prayers. The old woman needn't go away ; she is entirely to be trusted." " Get on, then," said he, " and say your prayers," but she went out to her husband's hiding-place and said : " How are you ?" " I'm dead," said he, " unless you bring me to life again."

" Our hope is in God. Be quite easy in your mind," said his wife, and they performed their ablutions together, and sat down together in the dark and said their prayers. Then she said : " O Your Majesty King Sulémān, take us and the castle and the King's Son and the old woman and the pigeon and the hound and the cat, and bring us back

to my own place !” Immediately they found themselves at her own home, and they sat down in a corner and slept till morning.

When they woke up they found that the King’s Son and the old woman were missing. They had started out with the intention of making their way back to his country, and they wandered about looking for it. When day broke they found, however, that they had not got back to his country, but were still in the same place, and they saw Malik Ibrāhīm and his wife coming along hand in hand.

Then Malik Ibrāhīm sent for the executioner and had the old woman caught and cut in two lengthways, and one half he had hung up at one gateway and the other half at the other. Then he came to the King’s Son and said : “ You iniquitous villain, what evil did I ever do to you ? There are plenty of women in the world, and God allots one to every man. There is no need to take any by force. One woman is as good as another ; some one or other will fall in love with you, take her away and marry her. One would think there were no women in your own country ! Good or bad, you would have got whatever was appointed for you by destiny.”

Then he gave orders, and they struck off the young man’s head, and he arrived straight in Hell.

“ I bought three hundred tumāns’ worth of advice,” said Malik Ibrāhīm, “ and if I had not told my secret and let the outside woman into my house I should not have suffered these misfortunes. And if it had not been for the pigeon, the hound, and the cat I should not have recovered my wife and caught the culprits.”

After this Malik Ibrāhīm and his wife settled down to live together in peace.

XLI

THE STORY OF THE PERI AND THE KING'S SON

THE story has come down to us that there were once two brothers, both of whom were kings. One of them had three daughters and the other had a son. The boy was sent to school, and for some years he pursued his studies, but when it became time for him to marry they took him away from school.

When he came home he used to sit about and never say a word, but he was always writing something. Sometimes he would suddenly disappear and not come back for five months, and when he did return he would not speak a word. One day his father said to him : " My son, I am a King, and I have no children but you, come now and let me give you a wife. I want to get one of your uncle's daughters for you." The Prince wrote on a piece of paper, " Why not ? I have no objection." So they made arrangements for the wedding.

He took his uncle's eldest daughter, and they brought her to the women's quarters. The first night he spent with her, and then he went away. He vanished completely and did not appear again for five months. Then he came back again, but he neither slept with her nor talked to her, and then he suddenly disappeared again and went off. The

bride went to her father and said : " I don't want this husband. He neither speaks to me nor lives with me." So her father procured a divorce for her.

After the lapse of several years the King said to his son, who had once more returned : " Come, let me give you a wife." The Prince wrote on a piece of paper : " I wanted my uncle's second daughter, why did you get me the eldest one?" The King went and told his brother, and they arranged to give him the second daughter. Just as in the case of his first wife, the King's Son slept with her one night and went away and did not come back for some months, so they procured a divorce for this daughter too.

Some years after this the King's Son wrote : " I want my uncle's youngest daughter." So they got her for him, but just as in the case of the other sisters, he slept with her one night and disappeared.

After some time the two elder sisters said : " It is an extraordinary thing that so young a girl as this should be able to manage a husband," and they took some women's trifles and sent them to her with a message : " Buy these." The girl took the things and said : " The Prince will shortly wake up from sleep." All of a sudden he came in and sat down in her room, and she said : " Cousin, my sisters have sent these things for you to buy for me." At once he wrote a cheque and gave it to her, but he said never a word, and the wife went off and drew the money and paid it where it was due.

One day the sisters said to her : " We are coming to be your guests to-day." " By all means," said she. Now she had a much-trusted slave-girl, and she said to her : " Girl."—" Yes. "—" Go and spread the bedclothes in there as if the Prince my husband were sleeping under them,

and every few minutes come into the room where I am sitting with my sisters and say : ‘ The master has asked for sherbet,’ then another time come and say : ‘ Lady, the master has asked for *you*.’ ” “ Very good,” said the slave-girl.

The sisters duly arrived on their visit, and as soon as they were come the slave-girl began coming in and out, saying one time : “ The master has asked for sherbet,” and another time : “ Lady, he has asked for you yourself,” and the mistress would go out and move about in the next room, and talk and laugh aloud, as though to say : “ I am chatting happily with my husband,” and then she would come back again. She did this to make her sisters jealous, and indeed their hearts were filled with envy when they saw these goings-on. Then when their youngest sister had duly entertained them they went away.

Suddenly the Prince came in ; he had a golden orange in his hand with which he kept playing, and when his time was up and he had to go again, he forgot about the orange and left it behind. Now his wife saw that he had forgotten the golden orange, and she took it away herself to keep it, so that it might not be lost before he came back again. As she was walking about she came to the mouth of a well, and by chance the orange fell into it. In her alarm at losing the orange she went down into the well after it, and there she saw a small door.

She went in at the door and found her cousin lying there with his arm round the neck of a lady so beautiful that there was no one like her. “ Good,” said she, “ so long as this beautiful *perī* stands in the way his heart will never go out to me. She noticed that the sunshine was falling on the *Perī*’s face, so she went and stood on the side that the sun was so as to shade her. Then she said : “ They will wake up

and be annoyed to find me here," and she pulled off her kerchief and made a screen with it over the sleeping Perī's head.

The couple slept on till it was nearly sunset, then they woke, and the Lady saw that there was a screen over her head, and she knew that this was the work of a human being who had shown great loyalty and devotion. "O Prince," said she, "you are my brother." "Why, what have I done wrong?" said he.—"You have done nothing wrong, but a kindness has been shown me by your wife, and I can no longer keep you from her. After this you must speak to her and live with her." The King's Son was greatly pleased at this, and the Perī gave him leave to go, and he went home.

When he came to his wife he began laughing, and said : "O Cousin, things have turned out well for you now. Come, and I will tell you the whole story." The girl was greatly pleased, and the Prince told her all about it : "I didn't talk because I wasn't allowed to, but now the Perī is delighted with you for the generous way you have acted, and has not only given me permission to talk to you, but to live with you, and she herself is become my sister."

Report was brought to the King that his son had spoken, and he too rejoiced. After that the Prince used to go every few days to visit his sister the Perī.

Thus every one who practises patience in the end attains his desire, just as did this youngest daughter of the King.

XLII

THE HEMP-SMOKER'S DREAM

THERE was once a man who smoked hemp and then went to the public baths. He sat down, and the Barber came to shave his head. The Barber put a mirror in his hand, and he looked at his own face in it and saw that there was nowhere another face so handsome. The idea seized on him that he should go and get the daughter of the King of China for his wife, and off he started.

When he had gone some distance he saw a man sitting by the roadside. The man addressed him, saying : "Where are you going ? If you are going to China, take me with you. My name is Tilīn Ahmad." They started to go on together, and presently Tīr-kamāndār Ahmad fell in with them. A little farther on Cherkh i Chīn Ahmad and Hawerdār Ahmad also joined in with them, and so they came to the city of Chīn.¹

They sent word to the King, saying : "We have come to get your daughter. If you don't give her to us we shall carry off the very soil of your town in bags." "Wazīr," said the King, "what am I to do ?" "Say to them,"

¹ Chīn is the country of China. It seems here to be used of the chief city of China. Tīr-kamāndār Ahmad means "Ahmad with the bow and arrows," Cherkh i Chīn Ahmad means "Wheel of China Ahmad," Hawerdār Ahmad means "Ahmad who knows what's going on." It is not certain what Tilīn means. It may possibly be "Golden" or, more probably, "Pot-bellied." The story isn't very clear in the Persian, but then it is only a dream story.

replied the Wazīr, "' We shall have a wager. I shall set seventy pots of *āsh* on the fire, and if you eat all the *āsh* I will give you my daughter.' "

The King approved this suggestion, and they went and told the visitors. They agreed to the suggestion, and Tīlīn Ahmad ate up all the seventy pots of *āsh*. " Very good," said the King, " now you must carry her marriage-deed round from the East to the West and ratify it." They took the marriage-deed and gave it to Cherkh i Chīn Ahmad, and in one hour he took it to the West, and then went and lay down to sleep under a *chenār* tree. As he was late in coming back, the others said : " Hawerdār Ahmad, it's your turn now." " He's sleeping under a *chenār* tree in such and such a place," said Hawerdār Ahmad.

Then Tīr-kamāndār Ahmad shot an arrow and hit the middle of the *chenār* tree, and some of the leaves fell on Cherkh i Chīn's face and woke him up. Then he got up, proceeded again on his way, and arrived back, and they ratified the marriage contract.

Then they mounted the bride on a horse and set out to return to their own country. On the way, however, they began

to quarrel over her. One said : " She is mine," another said : " She is mine," until suddenly their Master said : " Well, who am I, then ? Where do I come in ? "



The Barber was standing close in front of his customer

when the latter suddenly gave him a smart cuff on the side of the head. The Barber cried out : “ Here you, fellow, you son of a dog, what did you strike me for ? ” Then the Dreamer came to his senses and said : “ O Master Barber, please accept the excuse that I was intoxicated and was dreaming ; I have now come to my senses again.”

XLIII

THE STORY OF THE WOLF-BRIDE

It is related that there was once a man who had the fortune to obtain a son, and he went to the ākhund to get the boy's horoscope.¹ The ākhund told him : " Your son is fated to be torn in pieces by a wolf." The father went home and built an underground chamber and put his son in it. Then he procured an ākhund and brought him to teach the child.

In the course of some years the boy learned to read and write, and he grew up, and it became time for him to take a wife. His father's brother had a daughter, and they got her for him. The wedding celebrations lasted seven days and seven nights, and at the end of the week they brought the bride to the underground chamber to her husband, and they put the hand of the one in the hand of the other and came away, leaving them alone together.

No sooner did the youth put his arm round the girl's waist than she suddenly turned into a wolf and tore him in pieces. When she had done this, she turned again into the same girl as she was before. She sat down there, and had not the least idea how it had all happened, and she remained sitting where she was till morning.

When it was daylight the women came to her and found

¹ Many Persians still believe in astrology, more or less. The chiefs of a tribe will sometimes wait for a lucky day to start their tribe on the march or to set out on a journey.

the bride sitting there and the bridegroom's body torn to pieces. "Girl," they asked, "how has this come about?" "I don't know," said she, "but I know this much, that I turned into a wolf and tore him, and then again I turned back into myself."

The women raised shrieks and lamentations, and they carried off the youth's body and buried it, and men said: "Whatever is willed by fate, that verily comes to pass."

XLIV

THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO WENT TO WAKE HIS LUCK

THERE were once two brothers, one of whom was very rich and the other very poor. One day the latter went to the mountain where his brother's herds of horses were. When he got there he found that two or three of the mares had foaled, and he noticed that a man in a black felt coat was rounding them up and grazing them.

The Poor Brother went up to the Horseherd and said : "Who are you, and what right have you to graze these horses of my brother's?" The Horseherd replied : "I am your brother's Luck."—"Have you seen my Luck anywhere? I believe he's asleep. I wish he would wake up."—"It won't be long now," said the Horseherd, "he's due to wake up soon." "Tell me where I can find him," said the Poor Brother, "and I'll go and wake him myself." "He's asleep in such and such a cave," said the Horseherd.

So the Poor Brother started off, and went on his way till he came to a place where there was a garden. The Gardener asked him where he was going to, and he said he was going to look for his Luck and wake him. So the Gardener said : "Tell your Luck that I have a garden that yields no fruit, and ask him what the reason of that is."

Then the Poor Brother went on till he came to a certain

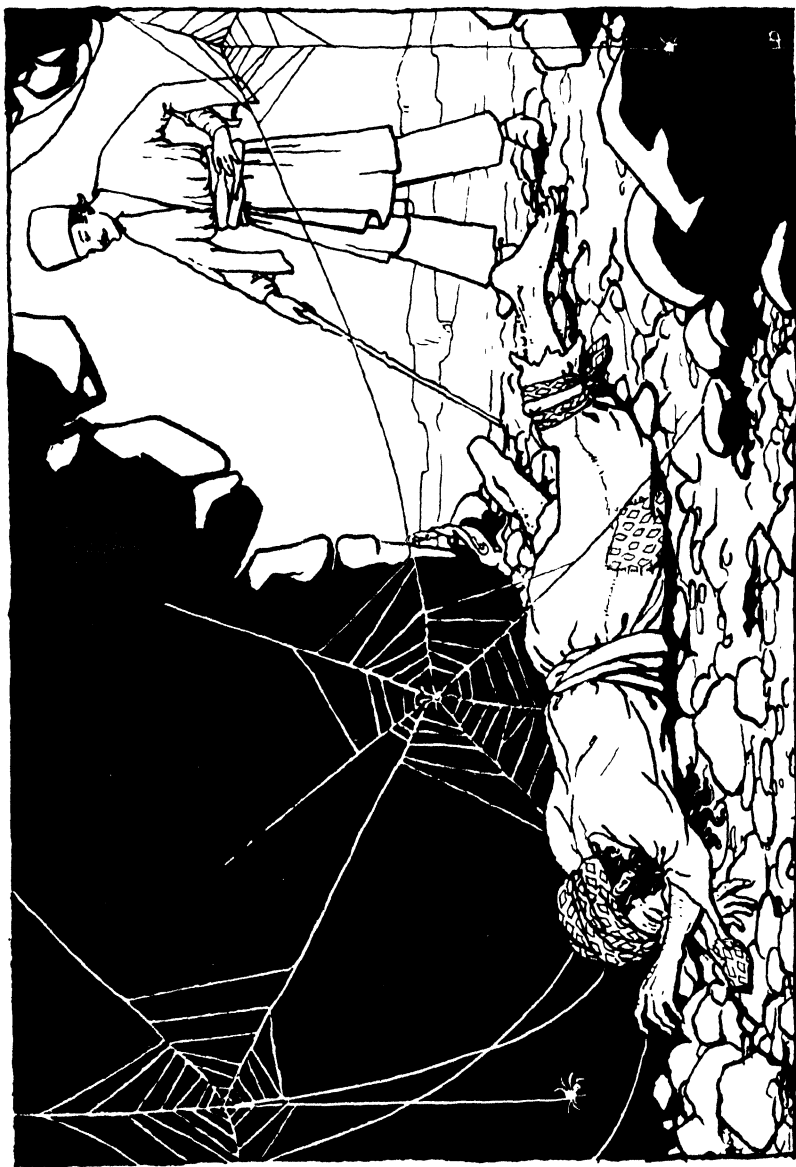
mountain where the people had a King who was a woman, but they didn't know that she was a woman. The King learned of the Poor Brother's quest, and sent for him, and said : "When you wake your Luck, ask him why these people of mine don't obey my orders."

Then the Poor Brother went on again and fell in with a Wolf, and the Wolf said : "Ask him why I get nothing to live on." Next he came to a Thorn-gatherer cutting thorn-bushes for fuel, and he said : "Ask why I have been condemned to earn my daily bread by gathering thorns."

And to them all the Poor Brother replied : "All right, I'll ask." Then he went on till he came to a cave where he found his Luck lying on his face sound asleep. He prodded him with his toe, and his Luck woke up and said : "What is it? What do you want?"—"I have come to wake you up."—"But I'm due to sleep for some years yet."—"But won't you wake up now? Several people have given me messages for you."—"All right, go ahead and tell me what the messages are."

So the Poor Brother asked his Luck the Gardener's question. "Tell him," his Luck replied, "that there are four earthenware jars full of gold coins hidden in his garden ; he must dig them up and then his garden will yield fruit." Then the Poor Brother repeated the King's question, and his Luck answered : "Say to him : 'You are a woman, that's the reason why people don't obey you.'"

After that he told his Luck what the Thorn-gatherer and the Wolf had asked, and his Luck answered : "Tell the Thorn-gatherer that as long as he lives things will go on just the same with him, neither better nor worse. And say to the Wolf : 'Whenever you meet a foolish man, eat him. That's the provision that has been made for you.'"



He found his Luck lying sound asleep.

The Poor Brother took leave of his Luck and started on his way home, and he came to the Thorn-gatherer and gave him his answer. Then he came to the King and said : " You are a woman." The King said : " Very good ! Come along and I'll marry you, and this kingdom of mine shall be yours." " No," said the Poor Brother, " you don't catch me staying here. Now that I have seen my Luck, do you think I'd be such a fool ? "

Then he went on till he found the Gardener, and told him about the four jars of gold coins that were hidden in his garden, and that if he dug them out the garden would become fruitful. The Gardener at once said : " Excellent ! Come along and let's get them out and share them between us." But the Poor Brother said : " No, I won't stay."

So he went on, and he came at last to the Wolf and gave him his answer : " Whenever you see a foolish man, eat him. That is your portion." " Thank you very much," said the Wolf. " I say, just look up a moment and see how many stars there are in the sky."

The Poor Brother looked up, and the Wolf immediately seized him by the throat, saying : " I have seen no greater fool than you ! "

And then the Wolf ate the Poor Brother up.

XLV

THE SAD STORY OF THE BEETLE, THE MOUSE, AND THE ANT

THERE was once a Black Beetle who said to herself : “ Why do I stay here ? I’ll go and visit the Mouse and marry him.” She started off and began walking along the road, and on her way she came to an old camping-ground. There she found a piece of goat’s-hair webbing and she put it on as side-locks, and the skin of an onion she made into a *chāder*.

Thus adorned, she went on her way, and presently she saw a man coming along riding on a cow. He called to her : “ Mistress Beetle, where are you going and where are you coming from ? ” “ May *you* become a beetle ! ” cried she. “ May you become mud ! may you be lost off the face of the earth—that is no way to speak to me ! They address me as ‘ Sister Nāzi, onion-veil, webbing-locks, forty-plaits.’ ”

“ Very good, Sister Nāzi, onion-veil, webbing-locks, forty-plaits, where are you going and where have you come from ? ” She answered : “ I’m going to Hamadān to marry Ramazān. I shall eat wheaten cakes and worry his beard.” “ Won’t you come and go along with me, then ? ” said he.—“ What will you mount me on ? ” “ I’ll mount you on my yellow cow,” said he.—“ It mustn’t kick and buck, then, and break my delicate arms and legs.”—“ Oh, all right, don’t come, then.”

On went Sister Nāzi, and on and on, and came to a certain place, and saw that a man was coming along riding on a mule. "Mistress Beetle, where have you been and where are you going?" asked he. "May *you* become a beetle!" cried she. "May you become mud! may you be lost off the face of the earth! Say: 'Sister Nāzi, onion-veil, webbing-locks, forty-plaits, where are you coming from and where are you going to?'"

"Very well, Sister Nāzi, onion-veil, webbing-locks, forty plaits, where are you coming from and where are you going to?"—"I'm going to Hamadān, I am going to marry Ramazān. I shall eat wheaten cakes and worry his beard." "Come along, I'll give you a mount and take you on your way," said the man.—"What will you mount me on?"—"On a mule."—"It mustn't kick and buck and break my delicate arms and legs." "Very well," said he, "you know best," and he rode on without her.

She went on and on till she came to the mark of a cow's hoof. By chance she fell into it, and however much she tried she couldn't get up out of it again. Just then some mounted men came riding along past her, and she called out: "O sowārs, you who are riding along, I hear the clatter of your horses' hoofs, and there is a greyhound with you—say to the Mouse, say to the Mouse with two teeth, say to the Terror of the Flourbag: 'Sister Nāzi, onion-veil, webbing-locks, forty-plaits has fallen into a pit, come and get her out.'"

The sowārs said: "Very good," and rode on, and they came to the Mouse's hole and told him all about it. Master Mouse set out to the rescue, and came to the place and saw Sister Nāzi lying at the bottom of a pit. "Give me your hand," said he.—"You mustn't break my arm." "Give me your leg, then," said he.—"You mustn't break my leg."

"Very well," said he, "then catch hold of my tail with your hand and climb up to the top." She did so, and he said to her : "Get up and ride on my tail." She mounted his tail and they went on towards Hamadān.

"Now wait here, my dear," said Master Mouse, "while I go on to find some food and bring it back, so that we may have something to live on." "Off with you," said she. But Master Mouse remained away for several days. Now Mistress Ant was in that neighbourhood, and he said to her : "O Ant, won't you marry me?" "No," said she. Somehow or other, however, he got her consent at last, and took her as his wife. Then he said : "Wife, you just stay here where you are till I come back." "Very well," said she.

When he came home again, Mistress Beetle got very angry. She said : "You went off and married a wife." But he took oath, saying : "If I have married a wife may this head of mine be pulled off, and may a dog eat you!" For all he could say, however, she wouldn't believe him, and she went off and flung herself into a puddle of water and drowned herself.

When Master Mouse came back he saw that Sister Nāzi, onion-veil, webbing-locks, forty-plaits had thrown herself into a water-hole and was drowned. Then he went off to keep his appointment with Mistress Ant. He took some sheep's trotters with him, and brought them and put them in a big pot on the fire, and said : "Wife, Companion of my Nights and Days, don't take the lid off this pot till I come back." With that he went off and was a long time in returning.

Mistress Ant, seeing that her husband hadn't come, went and lifted the lid off the pot, but then as she was trying to take out the trotters she herself fell in and was drowned,

and her body was swollen up with the water. Master Mouse came back presently, and not seeing his wife, said : “ Mistress Ant isn’t here. I’ll just take out my share of the trotters and eat it.” Then he went to the pot, and there he found Mistress Ant all swollen up with the water.



He beat his head and said : “ Dust on the head of the Mouse ! The water has killed Mistress Ant.” Then he went off and came under a tree. “ What’s the matter with you ? ” said the tree, and he replied :

“ Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant.”

Thereupon the tree shed its leaves. A crow came and alighted on the tree, and said : “ O tree, what’s the matter with you ? ” The tree replied :

“ The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant.”

Thereupon the crow moulted all his feathers and went to a spring to drink water. The spring inquired : “ O crow, every day you have come here with feathers on, what’s the matter with you to-day ? ” The crow replied :



“ The crow has moulted,
The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant.”

THE BEETLE, THE MOUSE, AND THE ANT 301

Then the spring became all bloody. Some ibex came to the spring and saw that it was all red. "O spring," they asked, "what is the matter with you? We have come here every day, and you have been nice and clear, but to-day we see that you have become all bloody." The spring replied :

"The spring has become all bloody,
The crow has moulted,
The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant."

The ibex did not drink the water ; they each dropped one horn and then went off to graze and came to Master Hare. "Why have you become like this?" asked he, and they replied :

"The ibex have each dropped a horn,
The spring has become all bloody,
The crow has moulted,
The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant."

Then the hare cut off his tail and went and lay down among the corn. An old man came up and saw the hare with his tail cut off. "Master Hare," said he, "every day when you came among the corn you had a tail. To-day I see you have none ; what has happened?" The hare replied :

"The hare has cut off his tail,
The ibex have each dropped a horn,
The spring has become all bloody,
The crow has moulted,

The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant."

The old man stuck a spade through his body and went off to his house. His wife was going along the road to get a griddle from her neighbours, and she saw the old man coming towards her. "Grandfather," said she, "what on earth's the meaning of this? What game are you playing at? Why have you stuck the spade through your body?" He replied :

"Grandpa has stuck a spade through his body,
The hare has cut off his tail,
The ibex have each dropped a horn,
The spring has become all bloody,
The crow has moulted,
The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant."

Then the wife threw the griddle round her neck and went into the house. The people in the house said : "Woman, have you gone mad? Why have you thrown the griddle round your neck?" She replied :

"Auntie has thrown the griddle round her neck,
Grandpa has stuck a spade through his body,
The hare has cut off his tail,
The ibex have each dropped a horn,
The spring has become all bloody,
The crow has moulted,
The tree has shed its leaves,
Dust on the head of the Mouse,
The water has killed Mistress Ant."

THE BEETLE, THE MOUSE, AND THE ANT 303

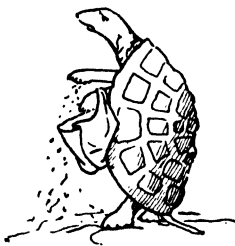
Then these people too got up and they pulled down the house and ran away, and they came to see the corpse of Mistress Ant, and raised great mourning and lamentation, and they buried her to the sound of music and of drums.

Then every one went straight off on his own way, and they became wanderers on the face of the earth out of grief for Mistress Ant.

XLVI

TORTOISE BOWL-ON-THE-BACK AND THE FOX

ONCE upon a time there was a Tortoise who was known as Bowl-on-the-Back. He was sowing seed when a Fox chanced to pass by that way and said to him : " May God give you strength," and went on his way. After some time the corn the Tortoise had sown sprang up, and summer came and the time for reaping it. Unexpectedly the Fox turned up again and said : " God give you strength," and went on his way.



He did not appear again till the harvest-time, when Bowl-on-the-Back had threshed and winnowed the corn. Then, however, the Fox threw a lot of big bags over his shoulder and came to the threshing-floor. " I have come for my share," said he. " You crazy rascal ! " said Bowl-on-the-Back, " your share of what ? " " Didn't I say to you : ' God give you strength ' ? " said the Fox. " Yes, no doubt you did," replied Bowl-on-the-Back, " but because you said : ' God give you strength,' do you think that made you my partner and gave you a right to share with me ? " And so they fell to quarrelling.

At last the Fox said : " Now do you know what you are

going to do? I and you will go off a long way and then we will race back to the threshing-floor, and whoever gets there first will be the owner of all the grain." "Very good, I agree," said Bowl-on-the-Back.

But he went off and told the whole story privately to his brother, and said: "Now do you go to the threshing-floor and hide there, for I can't possibly race the Fox, and when he comes running up, say: 'Eight and twenty, you've lost!'¹ and then you'll have scored off him absolutely, for he won't see any difference between us." After that the brothers went off together, and the one hid himself at the threshing-floor, and Bowl-on-the-Back went away with the Fox, and they started their race.

But Bowl-on-the-Back ran and hid himself under a small bush while the Fox went on running as hard as he could till he came to the threshing-floor. Just as he got there, Bowl-on-the-Back's brother cried out: "Eight and twenty, you've lost." "May your house be ruined!" screamed the Fox, "when did you get here that you're able to say: 'Eight and twenty, you've lost'?"

The Tortoise, however, only said: "You're not allowed to stand about here, be off," and he turned him out.

Then the Fox hung his head in shame and confusion and went off about his own business. And so every one who is greedy is put to shame.

The end.

¹ The idea seems to be that the one who got in first should begin counting "One, two, three . . ." and so on. Thus when the Tortoise said: "Eight and twenty," it meant that he had been in so long before the Fox that he had had time to count up to twenty-eight. Tortoises all look very much the same, and the Fox never suspected that Bowl-on-the-Back's brother was not Bowl-on-the-Back himself.

XLVII

THE FOX AND HIS ORDER FROM THE KING

ONCE upon a time there was a Fox who went to a village to look for a hen, for he hoped to find one that he could carry off and eat. When he got in among the hen-houses, however, the dogs saw him and gave chase. As he fled he chanced to run into a school-house, and as he ran through it a piece of paper caught on his tail and stuck to it, and there it remained as he sped out into the open and across the desert.

When he had escaped from the dogs and got safely home, all his brother foxes said to him : “ What’s that you’ve got on your tail ? ” “ That,” said he, “ is an order from the King that the dogs are not to attack me.” So they said : “ How splendid ! Whenever you go off to steal a hen just let us know, and we’ll come with you.”

Just then, however, they saw a party of horsemen coming along with dogs and hounds, and as soon as the dogs and hounds saw the foxes they started off after them. And the foxes ran this way and that to escape them, until they were quite tired and worn out.

At last they succeeded in getting to a place of safety. When the sowārs had finally disappeared, his friends said : “ O Brother, what was that you said : ‘ I have got an order from the King that the dogs are not to chase me ’ ? ”

“ Brothers,” replied the Fox, “ that’s all right ; whoever can *read* it will obey it.” ¹ But they all said : “ Never since we have been foxes have we been in such a tight corner as you got us into just now ! ”

¹ This isn’t very clear in the Persian, but the Fox probably meant that the order was all that he had told them it was, only the dogs were stupid and couldn’t read what it said.

XLVIII

THE STORY OF RAMAZĀN OF HAMADĀN AND THE POOR LABOURER

THERE was once a man who was forced by poverty to go and work as a common labourer. This continued for a number of years, and all the time he was toiling hard. At last he came into possession of one hundred tumāns, and he put them in a bag and took the bag on his shoulder and set out to return to his home.

Night overtook him in the desert, and he halted and lay down to sleep under a tree. He put the money under his head and went to sleep. Now some one came along and carried off his money while he slept. In the morning, while he was still looking about for it, two men came up and said to him : "What's the matter ?" "I had a hundred tumāns," he replied. "They were under my head, and a thief has gone off with them."

"Let us cast the divining earth for the money," said one of them, "and find out where it has gone to." "Well, if I get the money back," said the Labourer, "I'll give you something out of it." So they cast the divining earth, and one of the diviners said : "Your money is in a *hambān*," and the second said :

“ To recover your *hambān*,
 Seek the town of Hamadān
 And the house of Ramazān,
 Who dwells amidst the *misgerān*. ”

Then they proceeded together to seek the quarter of the *misgerān*, or coppersmiths, and the house of Ramazān. Having arrived in Hamadān, they asked a passer-by which was the house, and the man went in front of them and pointed it out to them. They went into Ramazān's house and said : “ You've stolen our money.”

“ Uncles,”¹ said Ramazān, “ how can you say that I have stolen your money ? ”—“ We cast the divining earth and found that it was your doing.” On this they started quarrelling, and the travellers went off to the Governor and complained to him, saying : “ We had a hundred tumāns and this man stole them. Order him now to return us our money.”

But Ramazān denied the charge : “ O Governor,” said he, “ in a city of this size, is it likely I should have stolen their money ? ” “ Go away till to-morrow,” said the Governor, “ and I will hold a trial by wager. If you win the wager, I will recover your money and return it to you ; but if you fail to answer the riddle I shall set, I will have you mutilated.”

Then the Governor dismissed the parties and gave orders to his servants, and they procured a load of oranges and pears and lemons and put them in a sack. The next morning the men presented themselves again, and the Governor said : “ If you can say what these things in the

¹ They weren't really his uncles. That was only Ramazān's polite way of speaking. Bakhtiārīs use the word “uncle” as we use “sir” or “friend.”

bag are, then Ramazān has stolen your money, but if you cannot tell what they are, then your claim will be dismissed."

One of the men picked up the bag and said :

"Round things, round as a ball are these,
But balls they are not, for God decrees
That sight and taste alike they please."

Then he put them down on the ground, and it was his friend's turn. He too picked them up and said :

"Round things, round as a ball are these,
Sight and taste alike they please,
Oranges, lemons, and pears from the trees."

So it was proved that Ramazān had stolen the money,¹ and the Governor passed orders, and he had to pay the claimants' two hundred tumāns, and the Governor himself also gave them a hundred tumāns.

Then they divided the money amongst them and went away, each to his own home, and the man who had been a labourer began to trade, and gradually he became a merchant, and he bought land and cows and sheep, and his affairs prospered greatly.

¹ Query : Was Ramazān really guilty ?

XLIX

THE STORY OF THE SHEPHERD WHO FOUND A TREASURE

THERE were once two shepherds with their flocks, and they were pasturing them out in the open country. One of them went to sleep, and the other was sitting beside him when he saw a green fly come out of the sleeper's nose into the open air.

Now he had milked some of the flock and obtained a bowl of milk into which he had put some rennet, and the milk had turned to cheese. He now laid a knife across the milk-bowl. The fly came and lighted on the knife and walked along from one end of it to the other. It went all over the knife, and the shepherd kept watching it all the time.

Then it flew off the knife and lighted on a stone. There were three stones in a row, and it chose the middle one and sat there a long time. Suddenly the shepherd cried out to his sleeping companion : " Get up, my lad, the flock has gone off ; a wild beast will fall on them and eat them up, and they are other people's property." " May God give you good ! " replied the other, " why wouldn't you let me finish my sleep ? "

Now the first shepherd, who had seen it, knew that the green fly was the other shepherd's soul, which had quitted

PERSIAN TALES

his body during his sleep, and he said : “ Brother.”—“ Yes.”—“ Let me buy your dream from you.”—“ All right.”—“ Well, in exchange for your dream you may have all the wages I get for looking after this flock.” The sleeper agreed, and the other said : “ Now tell me your dream.”

“ Brother,” said the sleeper, “ I saw in a dream¹ that I went over an iron bridge ; beneath my feet was a great abyss, and the water below was white. As I have just said, there was an iron bridge stretched over it, and I crossed it to the other side, and went and sat down in a place where it was all rocks and broken stones under my feet. Now there was a treasure hidden there, but you didn’t leave me in peace to see whether I should get possession of it or not.”

“ Well, I’m off on the tracks of your dream,” said the other, “ and you are entitled to my wages.” He got up and drove off his flock and went to the camp. There he drew his wages, and returned and gave them to the shepherd who had had the dream, and bade him good-bye, and went off to the place where he had slept.

There he pulled up the middle stone and found four jars full of jewels stowed away beneath it. He took them away with him and went to his house and hid them, and after that he worked no more as a shepherd.

¹ The green fly was really the sleeping man’s soul, and the dream was what it had seen when it came out of him. The iron bridge was the knife and the white water the milk in the bowl.

L

THE STORY OF THE MERCHANT AND THE SAFFRON

THERE was a wealthy merchant whose name was Malik Ahmad, and he possessed one hundred *karūrs* of qārāns, that is, fifty million qārāns, in cash, apart from landed property, and he had business in every city in which trade was carried on.

One day he noticed a hundred loaded camels coming in with a jingling of bells, and he said to his servants : “Go and see who these people are, and what they have and what the camel-loads are.” A servant went off and inquired of the man in charge, who replied : “The loads are saffron. My master said to me : ‘Go, and wherever people will purchase, sell them, and come back again.’ ”

The messenger returned and told Malik Ahmad, who said : “Go and call him to come here,” and two men went off and brought him up. Then Malik Ahmad said : “Unload the camels, and just put the saffron down in the mud for the present—we’ll build a caravanserai for it later ; and now load up the camels with jewels in payment, and let them go.” So they threw down the saffron in the mud and began to build a caravanserai for it, and soon completed it.

When some years had passed after this, evil luck befell Malik Ahmad. All the property he possessed in every

place was carried away by the wind of annihilation. All his trading agents failed and became bankrupt at one and the same time, and his affairs reached such a pass that he was utterly destitute, and had not a breath left to carry on even a trade in sighs.

At this point he thought to himself : " How can I endure to stay on in this country ? I had my own share of dignity and consideration, but now I have neither honour nor wealth. It is best that I should go away." So he set out with his back to the town and his face to the desert, and started on his way.

As it chanced, he came to the town in which lived the owner of the saffron. Night overtook him, and he saw that there was no place for him to put up in, for he was a stranger in the land. " God is kind," he said to himself, and presently he saw a man coming towards him. The man looked at him and said to himself : " Whether I say so or no, this is the very same merchant who unloaded the saffron into the mud and paid for it with loads of jewels." Aloud he said : " Uncle, who are you ? " " I am a stranger in this country," said Malik Ahmad. " You are my guest," said the man. " Come, let us go along."

Then he hastened to his master and said : " This is the merchant who bought the saffron and put it down in the mud, and paid for it with loads of jewels. I saw him here and invited him to be my guest." " Go quickly," said his master, " and bring him here, and let us see whether it is really he or not." The servant went out and brought in Malik Ahmad, and the Saffron Merchant thought to himself : " What sort of a man is this who is so extremely wealthy that he throws down saffron in the mud and wet and can afford to pay for it with loads of jewels, and whose affairs

have now come to such a pass that he abandons his home and takes to wandering ? ” Then he said : “ Whatever you may say, all has its origin in a man’s Luck, be it good or ill.”

He treated Malik Ahmad with great respect and offered him water and the *qaliān*, and showed him kindness. After supper he went in to him himself and made him many complimentary speeches, and said : “ O Sir, are you not the merchant who unloaded the saffron into the mud and sent loads of jewels in exchange ? ” “ Yes,” replied Malik Ahmad. “ Then how have you come to be in such a pitiable plight as this ? ”—“ By bad luck. In one year all the wealth I possessed in every place was borne away on the wind of annihilation. I do not know how my wealth came, and I do not know how it went.”

“ Very good,” said his host. “ Do you just stay here until your Luck wakes up again.¹ Then I shall make preparations for you to travel, and you can go away again. In the meantime, send a hundred tumāns every year at my charge to your wife and family for them to carry on with, till I see how things turn out.”

That year he bought one hundred sheep on his account to be Malik Ahmad’s own, but when winter came they all died. The news was brought that all these sheep had died, and his host said : “ Well, I’ll buy sheep again for you this year.” That year he spent two hundred tumāns and gave the sheep to Malik Ahmad, but when winter came they all died, not one of them survived.

The next year he bought three hundred sheep on Malik Ahmad’s behalf, and this year at last all had young ones, each ewe two lambs. When they brought the news that

¹ Persians often say : “ My Luck is asleep ” or “ My Luck has waked up.” You will know what they are thinking of if you have read Story No. 44 and Story No. 19.

each ewe had two lambs, the Saffron Merchant said : “ Good, his Luck has wakened up. Now I may make preparations for him to go.” So he went to Malik Ahmad and said : “ Do you know that your Luck has wakened up ? I shall now give you five hundred tumāns ; spend them and buy goods, and take them away with you and sell them in your own country.”

“ Very good,” said Malik Ahmad, and he took the five hundred tumāns and bought goods, and took them with him and set out for his own country. After some days he reached his home, and the news went about that a merchant had arrived with some loads of merchandise. Next morning he sold all the goods in such a way that his five hundred tumāns became two thousand tumāns.

Little by little he carried on business, and again ascended to the top of the staircase of prosperity of former days and became a wealthy man.

The story is ended.

LI

THE STORY OF THE SEVEN DAUGHTERS

THERE were a husband and wife who had seven daughters. The father used to go to the mountain every day, and every day he found and shot seven hill-partridges and he came back and divided them amongst them all.

One day the husband said : “ Wife, I am going to take the girls away with me somewhere and lose them, so that every day you and I may have the seven partridges for ourselves.” “ Very good,” said she. Then he said to his daughters : “ Come, let us make an excursion to the mountain to-day to gather *sésta*.”

So they started out and went with their father to the mountain, and there he ran away from them and went off. Thus the girls were turned adrift and went their way.

Now every day the father went to the mountain as before to shoot partridge, but despite all his efforts he was unable to shoot a single one, for they were the daily food allotted to the girls which God had provided for their sustenance.

Now hear about the girls. They went on and on till they came to a place where they fell into the hands of the evil Dīv, Allā Zingī. At night they sat down, and Allā Zingī, intending to eat the girls up when they went to sleep, cut off his foot and put salt on it to keep himself awake. After some time he called out : “ Who’s asleep and who’s

awake?" The eldest of the maidens replied: "All are asleep, only Tamtī is awake."

"Tamtī, my child, what's the matter with you?" asked he. "Father," said she, "I want seven horses with saddles." The Dīv immediately produced them, hoping that if she were satisfied she would then go to sleep, and after a while he again said: "Who's asleep and who's awake?"—"All are asleep, Tamtī is awake."—"Child, what do you want now?"—"I want seven large bags of jewels." These too he produced, in fact, whatever she asked for he provided, but still she would not go to sleep.

Again he asked: "Now, what do you want?" and she said: "I want ten loads of salt, ten loads of needles and cobbler's awls, and ten loads of syrup and ghee." These were all forthcoming, then he advanced towards her and said: "I will not stay my hand till I have tasted your blood."

But Tamtī had contrived to waken and warn her sisters, and the girls mounted their horses and carried off the jewels and treasure and fled. And as they fled they scattered the salt and the needles and the awls on the road behind them and galloped on as hard as they could go. Allā Zingī came along behind them in pursuit, but when he came to the skin of syrup he put his mouth to it and drank till he was sated. "It is very sweet," said he, thinking it was Tamtī's blood which he was drinking from her body, and then he followed on after the fugitives.

They crossed over some water on their horses, and when he came to the edge of it: "Tamtī, my child," he called, "where am I to cross over to you?" "Put your foot on that white stone," she replied. But it was really a piece of white foam, and when he put his foot on it he at once sank

down into the water and it carried him away, and he disappeared and arrived in Hell.

Now the seven maidens, having no scarcity of jewels and treasure, dressed themselves in men's clothing, and went on to a city and took up their abode in it as wealthy strangers, and in the daytime they used to go out and walk about looking at the *bāzār*. Now the King of that country had seven sons, and it chanced that these princes made the acquaintance of the seven strangers, and one day they made a wager together.

"If we lose," said the Princes, "the horses and accoutrements of all seven of us will become yours, and if you lose, you yourselves, with your horses and accoutrements, will become ours." So they went off to play a game of ball. Now there is a difference between men and women, and seven times the King's Sons carried the ball off the field, and seven times the maidens failed to hit the ball. So they lost the wager, and their horses and accoutrements and they themselves became the property of the Princes.

Then they sat down together, and the strangers told the secret of their hearts, saying : "In truth the facts about us are these." Then the seven King's Sons married them and took them to themselves as wives, and they all settled down to enjoy themselves.

Now all this time the girls' father, go out as often as he might, could not shoot a single partridge, so he said : "The birds were the provision made by God for the children. Come, wife, let us go and look for our daughters." Then they turned their backs on the town and their faces to the desert and set out, and proceeded for several days and nights, until it befell that they came to the city in which their daughters were.

Suddenly they came along to the foot of a castle and passed on. Now the young wives were sitting over the gate, and they looked out and recognised them. One of them said to the others : “ Sisters, our father and mother have arrived and gone on into the town,” and they despatched men after them, saying : “ Take those two persons and find them a lodging somewhere, and bring them supper.” The messengers went off and said to the couple : “ Our mistress has given orders that you are to come with us, and we are to provide you with a lodging.” And they took them and gave them a place to live in, and brought them bedding and supper.

Then when it was morning they directed them to go to the baths, and after that the messengers provided them with suits of clothes, which they put on, and brought them to the castle to their mistresses. “ Do you recognise us ? ” asked the girls.—“ No, how can we tell who you are ? ”—“ Well, we are your daughters whom you turned adrift, thinking, it would seem, that God would cut off the daily food of any one whom He had once created.” Then one of the daughters asked : “ Father, have you shot any partridges ? ” and he replied : “ No, not one.”

After this they all lived by themselves in peace and comfort.

The story is ended.

LII

THE STORY OF SHĀH ABBĀS AND THE POOR MOTHER

ONE night Shāh Abbās went out roaming, and he wandered about everywhere till he came to some ruins. There he became aware of a sound of children crying. They were saying : “ O Mother, we are dying of hunger. Have pity on our hunger ! ” And the mother was weeping with them, saying : “ May God slay your mother, she has no food for you. What is she to do ? ”

The Shāh listened. Now he had on a derwīsh's clothes, and a begging bowl ¹ full of *āsh* was slung over his shoulder. He advanced, and the woman saw, as she thought, a derwīsh coming up. She rose to receive him, and he sat down and took off the begging bowl with the *āsh* in it and set it before them, and they ate their fill. Then when he was about to go away he took a ring off his finger and gave it to the woman, and said : “ Take this and hand it in at the baker's shop, and then you can always go and get bread there till your children are grown up.” Then he rose and went away.

The woman gladly took the ring and went to the baker's shop, and took it out and gave it to him, saying : “ Master

¹ Derwīshes usually carry a bowl, which is often half of the outer shell of a cocoanut, in which they put any money that is given them, or store, until they want to eat them, the scraps of food they get by begging.

Baker, take this ring, and in exchange give me bread every night for my children." The Baker took it and examined it, and saw that it was a wonderful ring and worth a thousand tumāns, and he said : " Woman, who gave you this ring ? " — " No one, it is my own." " No, you have stolen it," said he, and he seized her and carried her before the Chief of the Police, and said : " O Darōgha, last night this woman came and stole a box of mine in which I had a ring, and now she has brought the ring and given it to me as if it were her own, and I have arrested her and brought her here before you. If you are indeed Darōgha of this district, then deal with her as you think best."

The Darōgha said to his men : " Very well, arrest her," and they seized the poor woman, and the Darōgha gave orders and they cut off her ears. " Now be off with you," said he, and she returned to her children and began to bewail herself, saying : " O God, grant not pardon to that Derwīsh. All other nights we were better off than this, for to-night not only are we hungry, but I have had my ears cut off. I know not whence he stole the ring which he gave me and told me to take to the Baker, but he must have known it belonged to the Baker. Wretch ! When you knew you had stolen it, why did you tell me to take it back ? O Lord, may this Derwīsh find no happiness during the rest of his existence since he has brought this misery into our lives ! "

Now Shāh Abbās came along, as on the preceding night, to see how they fared, and again he heard them sighing and lamenting, but their lamentation was greater than before. He went on and entered the house, and all the children screamed out together, " O Mother, the Derwīsh of last night has come again !" and the woman said : " O Derwīsh,

God grant that you may enjoy no happiness while you live ! ”
 “ Sister,” said he, “ why ? ”

Then she told him all the story, and he said : “ Good, get up and come along to my house.” She got up, and they took the children on their shoulders and came to the door of the Shāh’s palace, and they entered the royal court. But the woman said : “ Where is he taking us to ? ” and she was afraid. Then he took them and handed them over to the eunuch in charge of the harem, saying : “ Take good care of these people, and apply a salve to this woman’s ears.”



Then he went away, but he lay awake till daybreak and could not sleep, but kept saying : “ O God, what am I to do about the wrong I have done to these children and to this woman who has had her ears cut off ? ”

Meanwhile the eunuch of the harem came and applied a salve to her wounds and she was relieved of her pain.

In the morning Shāh Abbās dressed himself in crimson robes, and said : “ Go and bring before me such and such a baker and the Darōgha of the bāzār.” They brought them into his presence, and the Shāh said : “ O Baker, did you possess that ring ? If the ring is yours, produce its fellow. But if you cannot do this and if I have the fellow of it, then it is mine.” The Baker produced the ring, and the Shāh brought out another ring exactly like it. And the people present exclaimed : “ The two rings are exactly alike, there is no difference between them. They are both the Shāh’s.”

“ Good,” said the Shāh. “ Darōgha, you are the Chief Police Officer of this district, why do you not ascertain the true facts of a case before you punish people ? ” and he gave orders, and they crucified both the Baker and the Darōgha, and the Shāh seized all the wealth and property they possessed and bestowed it on the children and their mother.

The story is ended.

LIII

THE APPARITION OF THE PROPHET KHIZR

THERE was once a poor man who was very much in debt. Now there was a King in that country who ardently desired to see the Prophet Khizr,¹ and he said : “ If any one will show him to me I will give him whatever he wants.” The poor man came to the King and said : “ Give me a thousand tumāns and I’ll show you the Prophet Khizr.”

The King issued orders and they gave him a thousand tumāns, and the King took a written agreement from him that if he failed to show him the Prophet he should have his head cut off. After that the man went home, and all his creditors came to him and he paid them their claims, and he himself sat down to have a good time of it.

When the appointed period of forty days had passed, he said to his wife : “ Wife, they are going to execute me to-day.” “ Why ? ” asked his wife. . And he explained to her : “ I made such and such an arrangement with the King, and now what harm will it be if I, a single individual, die ? You at any rate will live on in comfort.”

¹ Ordinary Muhammadans usually think that the Prophet Khizr is the same person as Elijah in the Bible. But more learned ones say he wasn’t a prophet at all, but only a wise and saintly man who was Wazir to a great conqueror who lived in the time of Abraham. He is said to have drunk of the Water of Life, so that he will live till the Day of Judgement. He often appears to good Muhammadans when they are in difficulties, and he generally wears green clothes. The word for “ green ” in Arabic is nearly the same as his name. (See Lane’s *Modern Egyptians*.)

Then he went to the King's hall of audience, and the King asked : "Have you brought Khizr?" "No, I haven't," said he. "O King, did you really imagine I could call up Khizr? I was in debt and at my wits' end, and I renounced my life; now I am come here on my own feet and of my own free will for you to cut off my head." "O Wazīrs," said the King, "say what we ought to do to him."

One of them said : "It would serve him right if you cut up his flesh with scissors." Now it chanced that an aged man came in, and when he heard this speech of the Wazīr he said in the Arabic language : "Every man speaks according to his own intelligence."

Then a second Wazīr said : "It would be only right that you should put him in a baker's oven and let him be burnt up," and again the aged man made the same remark.

Then a third of them rose and said : "He deserves to be cut up into little pieces with a razor," and again the same Arabic words fell from the lips of the old man.

Yet another Wazīr rose and said : "O King, it would be well that you give him a village and some money along with it." "Now what do *you* say, old man?" asked the King.

"I say," said the old man, "that your first Wazīr is by origin a tailor, for he talks of scissors; and the second was formerly a baker, for he speaks of ovens; and the third a barber, with his talk of a razor; as regards the fourth, from generation to generation he and his family have been Wazīrs. For in truth it was out of desperation that this man put his head in jeopardy, for he could not face his wife for shame. And now, behold, he has shown you Khizr!" With these words the speaker suddenly vanished, and the debtor said : "This was assuredly the Prophet Khizr and

no other.” The King made every effort to find the Prophet, but without success, and he said : “ Alas ! Why did I not catch him by the sleeve ? ”

Then he presented a village and some money to the poor man, who went off about his business, and the King drove out the three Wazīrs and kept only the fourth, who had counselled mercy and generosity.



LIV

THE STORY OF THE IMPIOUS THORN-GATHERER

THERE was once a Thorn-gatherer who went out every day to the mountain and brought back thorn-bushes and sold them for a grān a load. One day he said : “ O God, what evil have I done that Thou hast given me a draft on thorn-gathering for my daily bread ?¹ Now, as things are so, I will quit this country of Thine in anger, and go somewhere where I shall not be in God’s country.”

And he went out from that place of habitation and fell to journeying. Now it chanced that he saw a man on the road, and the man said to him : “ Uncle, where are you going ? ” “ I have taken flight,” said he, “ in order to get away from the country of God.” “ Very good,” said the stranger, “ I have two hundred tumāns to share between us, and we’ll go and trade.”

So they started out together, and they went and trafficked as traders and bought and sold. They made three hundred tumāns profit, and the Thorn-gatherer said : “ Come along and let’s divide it,” but the other said : “ No, let’s go back to the spot where we first entered into partnership and there

¹ He thought that God had given him an order by which he could get his daily bread from thorn-gathering, just as if thorn-gathering were a bank, and he didn’t like this arrangement, because he could get very little out of it.

divide it." On the way there they came to a village and bought a piece of bread and an earthen jug of water, and then they went on till they came to the place where they had first met.

There the man put the three hundred tumāns as one lot and the bread and water as another lot, and said : " Take whichever you like." " Not so," said the Thorn-gatherer, " we will eat the bread and drink the water together and divide the money between us," but his partner wouldn't agree, so the Thorn-gatherer took the money, and the other took the bread and water and went off another road by himself.

Now the Thorn-gatherer went on and came to a place where it was very hot, and he began to be hungry and very thirsty and felt that he would presently die. Some little distance farther on he saw a man with a piece of bread, and he asked : " What is the price of your bread ?" " A hundred tumāns," answered the man. " It's very dear," said the Thorn-gatherer. " If you want it, take it ; if you don't want it, don't take it," replied the man. He had no choice, so he paid the hundred tumāns and took the bread.

When he had gone on some distance farther he saw another man with a jar of water, and he asked him too : " What is the price of it ?" " A hundred tumāns," said the man. He was so thirsty by this time that he bought the water without more words and drank it. Then he was attacked by a sudden pain in the stomach and felt that he was just going to die ; he saw another man, however, and said to him : " I have a pain in my stomach," and the man replied : " I have a pill here which I can give you, and if you take it you'll get better, but it costs a hundred tumāns."

The Thorn-gatherer paid him the money and bought the pill, and he got well again, and after that he went on to a village. Some days later a man said to him : “ Why haven’t you quitted the country of God ? ” And he said : “ I’m going to quit it.” The stranger said : “ You must pay three hundred tumāns a day, which is due to God.”—“ But God hasn’t given me more than a qṛān a day, why must I pay Him three hundred tumāns ? ”—“ A few days ago didn’t you give two hundred tumāns for bread and water ? ” “ Yes, I did,” said the Thorn-gatherer.—“ And you paid another hundred tumāns for medicine before you got well, didn’t you ? ”—“ Yes.”

“ Then know that if God wished to afflict you every day He could do so, and if He wished not to give you bread He could likewise withhold it from you. Know, then, that God exists.”¹ Now the man who thus instructed the Thorn-gatherer in the way he should go was an angel, and when he had spoken thus he vanished.

. Then the Thorn-gatherer repented his former actions and his impious speech, and he remained in the country of God, and in course of time he became possessed of much wealth.

¹ It isn’t very clear exactly what the angel meant. However, the Thorn-gatherer apparently understood. Perhaps it was that he ought to have considered himself very lucky to have had enough money, even if it was very little, to buy bread with. When he managed to get more money he was really worse off, because he fell into the hands of profiteers. God *might* have given him *no* money, and have forced him to deal with profiteers all the same, and then he would have starved. The angel was probably the person who first said : “ The wind is tempered to the shorn lamb.” It isn’t always true.

LV

THE STORY OF THE KING AND THE TWO BLIND BEGGARS

THERE were once two blind men, and they used to go every day and sit by the side of the road to beg. One used to say : “ Akbar, give me something,” and the other used to pray : “ God of Akbar, do Thou give unto me ! ” Now the name of their king was Akbar.

One day the King passed that way and heard them, and he put a hundred tumāns at the bottom of a dish of *āsh* and said to his servants : “ Take this to the blind man who says : ‘ Akbar, give me something.’ ” The messengers took the *āsh* and gave it to the Blind Man, and he ate a little and was satisfied, and what was left at the bottom he gave to the other Blind Man, whose prayer was : “ God of Akbar, do Thou give unto me ! ” Now the second beggar put his hand into the dish and found the money, and he put it in his bag and went his way.

Morning came again, and the first Blind Man came and kept saying : “ Akbar, give me something,” and the second prayed : “ O God of Akbar, Thou hast given, give again ! ” The Shāh listened and noticed what they said,



and it became evident to him that God had given the money to the second blind beggar and not to the first, so he said : “ Good fellow, you said : ‘ Akbar, give me something ! ’ and I gave you something, but the God of Akbar gave it to that other blind man. It’s not my fault. Ask God for it. If God wanted to give you anything, He has plenty He can give you.”

LVI

THE STORY OF THE FATE OF THE KING'S ONLY SON

THERE was once a King who for a long time had no children. At last he obtained a son, and he instructed the Astrologers to look and see whether the Prince had an appointed destiny or not.

When they had made their observations, one of them said :

“ When he is fourteen years old a snake will bite him ” ;

another said :

“ When he is fourteen years old he will fall down from a height ” ;

and yet another said :

“ When he is fourteen years old he will be drowned in the water.”

“ He's only one child after all,” said the King, “ so how can he be fated to meet with these three different disasters ? The predictions of two of these fellows must be false.”

Then the King took a written agreement from the Astrologers giving him the right to cut off the head of any of them who might prove to have prophesied falsely. All three of them gave him written undertakings to this effect and went their way.

Then the King committed his son to the care of a guardian, to whom he said : “ Don’t let him go outside the garden in the courtyard.” Now it chanced that there was a tree in the garden, and a sparrow built her nest at the top of it, and at the foot of the tree there was a large tank of water.

In due course the fourteenth year came round, and the boy climbed up into the tree to bring down the sparrow’s nest. Now there was a snake in the nest, and as soon as the boy put out his hand to the nest the snake bit it, and he tumbled down from the tree and fell into the water and was drowned.

Then they took the news to the King, and they raised wailing and lamentation, and carried away the body and buried it.

Verily, whatsoever is written on the forehead cannot prove false.



LVII

THE STORY OF HAIDER BÈG AND SAMAMBER

THERE was once a man called Haider Bèg who was one of Shāh Abbās's Qizilbāsh, and there was a maiden called Samamber who was the daughter of the Qāzī of Kashmīr. Now she was skilled in medicines, and it was her custom to come every year from Kashmīr to the mountain called Kōh Jumbīd, which is in the Bakhtiārī country close to Chighakhōr, and gather medicinal herbs there and go away again.

One time she prepared her camp equipage as usual and came to the Bakhtiārī country to gather herbs. She reached Kūh i Kallār, which is immediately beside Chighakhōr itself, and as it chanced, Haider Bèg also came there from Isfahān for sport. At Chāl a Dū, above Chighakhōr, he found a tent pitched there, of which all the ropes were of silk and the pegs of gold, and a fair lady was sitting on a couch ; she was so beautiful that nothing to match her had ever been seen.

"I'll go in and speak to her," said Haider to himself, and he went on and drew near the tent. Now the maiden had a woman-companion with her, and this duenna went forward to meet the stranger and said to him : "This tent is a maiden's and you are a man. Don't come near it."

But he would not listen, and pursued his way. Samamber then called out to her followers, and they speedily struck the tent, loaded up, and moved on.

Passing by the Chashma i Zaināl Khān, they came along below the lake and approached near to Sangchīn and 'Pul Mōrī, and all the while Haider Bèg kept following along behind them. Chancing to look round they saw him, and Samamber turned back and said to him : " Your greed has been aroused, no doubt, by seeing the property of a defenceless girl. You can't have seen my lion in the jungle. I have one, and it's a he-lion, too. As you haven't seen him, I'll show you how my lion fights."

Then when they came near a large rock Samamber drew her sword from its sheath and set upon him. Haider Bèg, however, had no heart to fight her : " This is but a girl," he said to himself. " If I slay her, what honour shall I gain ? And as far as she herself is concerned, it would be a pity that she should be killed." They exchanged blows, and Samamber fought with anger in her heart. Suddenly she raised her arm and smote her opponent on the fore part of the head, and he fell from his horse to the ground at the foot of the rock.

Leaving him there, Samamber rode on and rejoined her companions, but immediately she regretted what she had done, and said : " It was a pity. He was such a fine young fellow." To her companion she said : " Mother, I have done an evil thing, I have cut down that Persian youth with my sword. He could not find it in his heart to strike at me, otherwise he would have hewn me in two, and yet I smote him. It was not a fair thing to do. Now go back to him and make a shade over his head with this kerchief, and place this bag of money under his head. If he dies it will pay for

his shroud and burial, and if he lives it will detract the expenses of his wound till he is well again."

The duenna went back, and coming up she saw that the young man whom the girl had wounded with her sword was a very handsome young fellow, and he was lying there writhing in his own blood. Her heart burned for him, and she went and put the kerchief for a shade over him, and the bag of money she placed likewise under his head, and went her way. And Samamber and her party departed for Kashmīr.

Meanwhile Haider Bèg remained lying at the foot of the rock, and some days later a caravan passed by on its way somewhere or other. The travellers saw him and picked him up, and he remained with them for some days and recovered, but the wound on the front of his head was visible. When he was again able to travel, he proceeded to Isfahān and presented himself on one occasion before the Shāh.

The Shāh looked and saw that it was Haider Bèg, and that he had a wound on the side of his head. At this he marvelled, saying: "No one ever wounded him before. How has it come to pass now?" and he inquired and said: "Who gave you that wound on the front of your head?" Haider Bèg replied respectfully: "I should prefer to tell you in private." Thereupon the Shāh cleared the court, and Haider Bèg told him all that had happened.

"Can you go and bring her here?" said the Shāh. "Yes, I will go," said Haider Bèg, and he made his preparations and set out. After some months he arrived in Kashmīr, and he saw that there was a wedding going on. "Whose wedding is this?" he inquired, and they answered: "The wedding of the Qāzī's daughter with his brother's son." "What is the name of the Qāzī's daughter?" he asked, and they said: "Samamber."

“ Ah me,” said Haider, “ I have come all this way and undergone all these hardships, and yet I have nothing to show for it.” Then he took heart and said : “ Good. I’ll find myself a lodging and—God is kind.” So he went on and found an old woman, and obtained quarters in her house. Then he tied up his horse and came out to the end of the street.

Now they had taken the bridegroom to the baths, and Haider Bèg knew he was there, so he collected some children and gave them silver *shāhīs*, and said : “ When the bridegroom comes out, all clap your hands and cry out together : ‘ Samamber has a lover in Īrān.’ ” And the children said : “ Very good.” In the meantime the attendants had dressed the bridegroom in his wedding clothes and he came out from the baths. Instantly the children in the street began clapping their hands and shouting out : “ Samamber has a lover in Īrān.”

They all shouted in chorus, and the bridegroom heard and waxed wroth, but he said nothing while they led him to the women’s apartments and placed Samamber’s hand in his. Then the women withdrew and left the two together, but the cousin had brought a sword with him to slay his bride, and he began to upbraid Samamber, saying : “ You have a lover in Īrān. Every year you go to Persia to meet him. I have no use for such a bride.” Samamber answered him warmly, and thereupon they began disputing and a quarrel ensued.

Now listen to a couple of words about Haider Bèg. When they brought the bridegroom to the women’s apartments he stole along behind them, saying to himself : “ Let me see what happens,” so he went, and with his dagger excavated a hole in the back of the fireplace of the room

they were in, and then hid himself in it and listened to all that they said. All of a sudden the bridegroom threw Samamber down and kicked her and began beating her, and Samamber remembered Haider Bèg and cried out : “ O Haider Bèg, where are you ? I fought with you and you spared me in the combat, nor did you trample me under your horse’s hoofs. *Now* I would pay heed to whatever you might say. I have fallen into the clutches of a cowardly ruffian. Where are you, that you may deliver me out of his hands ? ”

Hearing this, Haider prayed to God for help, and in the meantime he had stolen away the bridegroom’s sword and hidden it with himself. The bridegroom went about looking for his sword, but he could not find it. “ Never mind,” said he, “ the women, no doubt, have taken it away.” All of a sudden Haider sprang out of the fireplace like a flash of fire, and when Samamber saw him she cried out : “ Strike off the head of this foul-mouthed beast,” and he smote him on the neck like a dog and his head flew off.

Then they made fast the end of a rope, and let it down from the window and escaped out of the castle, and he brought a horse from the stable for Samamber and himself mounted his own and they rode away hard by night and day.

When morning broke the bridegroom’s mother came to see why her son was so long in coming out. “ He must be still asleep,” she said ; “ he and his wife must have got



on well together.” By mid-day, however, when he had still not appeared, she said : “ I must go and see why he hasn’t come out,” and she went into the women’s apartments and found that her son had been killed and wrapped up in a quilt, and his wife was nowhere to be seen. The women began to wail, and people gathered round and they buried the dead body.

When they had travelled for some time, Samamber and Haider Bèg arrived at Ispahān, and Haider Bèg went to Shāh Abbās and said : “ I have brought her.” The Shāh presented him with a robe of honour and said : “ Bring her to the women’s apartments.” So he came to Samamber and said : “ O Samamber, we must go to the Shāh’s harem.” “ Why ? ” said she.—“ Shāh Abbās has something to say to you.”

They got up and went to the women’s apartments in the palace, and when Shāh Abbās arrived he inquired, saying : “ Samamber, do you want me, who am the Shāh, or do you want Haider Bèg, who has suffered so much on your account ? ” “ O Qibla of the Universe,” said she, “ it would not be just that a man should endure so much for me and that I should wound him without offence on his part and now say : ‘ I do not want you, I want the Shāh.’ ” Then the Shāh kissed her on the forehead and said : “ You are my own child and I have bestowed you on Haider Bèg, and whatever you want of all that I possess, take it and spend it.”

Samamber was overjoyed, and rose up and came to the house of Haider Bèg, and they sent for the Qāzī, and he came and married them. And they carried on the wedding celebrations for seven nights and seven days. And after the seven days they brought her to the women’s apartments, and she and Haider Bèg became husband and wife.

Now it chanced that Haider Bèg had a friend in another town with whom he had become a sworn brother, and they had made a covenant on the Qur'ān that they would ever be to each other as brothers. The name of this friend was Mahmūd. He came one time to Isfahān and lived in the house of Haider Bèg, and he stayed there some months. One day Samamber had gone to the baths and was coming along the street on her way back. Mahmūd was also coming along on his way home. The wind blew up Samamber's veil, and Mahmūd looked and saw her. He saw that God had never before created so lovely a woman, and he was so smitten with a passion for her that he was scarce able to make his way to the house, and the colour of his face turned yellow like saffron.

When he reached the house, Haider Bèg looked at him and said : " Brother, what is wrong with you that your colour has so changed ? " " Nothing," said Mahmūd. " Come now, don't be shy," urged his friend, " tell me so that I can think of something to do for you." Then Mahmūd said : " Brother, I went out and passed along in front of the baths, and my eye fell on a woman—such a beautiful woman as she no one has ever seen. And my heart has passed out of my control and my colour has changed, and I can find no peace."

Now Haider Bèg knew that Samamber had been at the baths, and guessed that it must have been she that Mahmūd had seen, and he said : " Brother, do not fret, I'll think of something for you. In fact, I know who the woman is, and I shall get her for you. Do not be disturbed." When he heard this, Mahmūd recovered his spirits, and Haider Bèg went into the house.

He saw that Samamber had just come back from the

baths, and he said : “ O Samamber,” and she answered : “ Yes,” and he said : “ I have made a present of you to some one.”—“ Why ? ”—“ Because I wanted to.” Samamber saw that he was speaking the truth, and she tore her face and began to wail and lament, saying : “ What have I done wrong ? ” “ You have done nothing wrong,” said he, “ but I have a brother, and as you were returning from the baths the wind blew aside your veil and he saw your face, and he fell in love with you. Now I cannot bear to grieve him, and if you love me you must say nothing, and I shall tell him : ‘ This is my brother’s daughter,’ and give you to him in marriage as my niece.”

Immediately he sent for the Qāzī, and the Qāzī annulled her marriage bond and married her anew in the name of Mahmūd Bèg. Then Haider went to Mahmūd and said : “ I have procured her for you and have had her married to you.” Mahmūd was delighted, and they celebrated the nuptials for seven nights and seven days. Then they decked out Samamber, and took her to the baths and brought her to the women’s apartments. But her tears poured down like the rain in spring-time, and she said : “ What calamity is this which has fallen upon my days ? ” And they brought the bridegroom and put his hand in Samamber’s, but she ceased not from weeping.

“ Wife,” said Mahmūd Bèg, “ why is this ? People who marry are full of joy and gladness, but you make mourning. Tell me what is on your mind, for my heart is grieved for you.” “ It is nothing,” replied she. “ Nay,” said he, “ I adjure you by that God who created all the world, and who created you, tell me that I may know why you weep and what is the cause of your sorrow.”—“ Well, since you adjure me by an oath, hear then : I was the wife of your

brother, and when you had seen me he could not bear to grieve you, but put me away and married me to you, and now my heart is consumed away because of the misery that Haider Bèg endured for me."

Now when Mahmūd heard these words he rent the collar of his coat, and he rose up and kissed her on the forehead, and said : " You are my sister." Then he went to Haider Bèg and began to shed tears, and Haider Bèg said : " Brother, what's the matter with you ? " and he said : " You have put me to shame—you have given your own wife to me."—" Well, when you told me of how you had seen her and of your love, I could not bear to make you unhappy." " She shall be my sister in this world and the next," said Mahmūd Bèg, and again they annulled her marriage and married her afresh to Haider Bèg. Some time later Mahmūd married another wife, and settled down in Isfahān, and they all abode there together until they died.

LVIII

THE STORY OF THE BAKER AND THE GRATEFUL FISH

THERE was once a baker, and every morning when he mixed his dough he used to throw into the river all the bread that had got burnt and all the dough that was spoiled, and the fishes ate it up.

Now one time a travelling merchant turned up and said : “ I want to engage a servant. I’ll pay him a hundred tumāns a month, and for the first forty days he will have no work to do. On the fortieth day he will have to work two hours for me.”

The Baker went to him and took service with him on these terms, and for forty days he found that he had no work to do, and the Merchant showed him great kindness. When the forty days were up his master took some mules and loading-bags, and said : “ Come along and let’s go to a certain place.” Then he killed a cow and skinned it, and they loaded the skin and the meat on the mules and started out.

When they came to the foot of a mountain the Merchant lighted a fire and took out the cow’s skin, and said : “ Now, come along and get into this, so that I may see how much it will hold.” On this the Baker, suspecting nothing, got into the skin, and immediately his master tied up the neck of it tightly, while he threw the meat into the fire.¹

¹ The Merchant knew that the smell of the burning meat would attract the bird, and

Presently a bird came and seized the skin with the man in it in its talons and carried it off to the top of the mountain, where it pecked at the skin with its beak till it tore a hole in it. But when the Baker came out the bird flew away. He then called out: "Master, how am I to get back?" "Throw down the jewels," replied his master, "and then I'll show you the way down."

The Baker looked about him and saw that there were jewels lying strewn about, so fine that it is impossible to describe them. He threw down large quantities of them, and the Merchant made them up into loads and placed the loads on the mules. "Now, Master," said the Baker, "where is the way down?" "Don't you see the dead men round you?" replied the Merchant. "There *is* no way down. You must just die up there as they have done, and your flesh will be devoured by the vultures and crows, and your bones will remain lying there." Then he took his loads of jewels and went off to the town.

"Good," said the Baker, "if I stay here the vultures and crows will eat me, and if I throw myself into the river the fish will eat me, but that would be preferable." Then he climbed up to the top of the mountain whence the river was visible, and threw himself down into it. Now the fishes recognised their friend the Baker who was wont to feed them, and they formed themselves into a raft and carried him across the river, and he reached the dry land in safety and went off home.

When some months had passed, the Baker again saw his late master coming, and knew him. Again the Merchant

also that the bird would think that the cow's skin with the man inside it was a whole cow and would carry it off up on to the mountain to eat it there. He was quite right. He had done it many times before, for the dead men's bones on the top of the mountain were those of other servants he had left there in the same way on previous occasions.

said : " I'll give a hundred tumāns a month to any one who'll be my servant." Then the Baker disguised himself, so that the Merchant did not recognise him, and said : " I'll be your servant," and he took the hundred tumāns and went with him.

When forty days had elapsed the master took his mules and killed a cow as before and skinned it, and they went off to the foot of the mountain. " Get into the skin," said the Merchant. " Master," said the Baker, " I don't quite know how to do it. Get in yourself first and show me, so that I may see how it's done." The Merchant got in to show him, and the Baker quickly tied up the neck of the skin, and the bird came and carried it off to the top of the mountain.

Then the Baker said : " Master, I am the same man whom you left last year on the top of this mountain, and I found a road for myself and came down, so now I know the way. Just you throw down the jewels and I'll show you how to escape." The Merchant threw down all the jewels he was able to collect, and the Baker loaded the mules with them. " Now where's the road ? " asked the Merchant. " You must either stay where you are," answered the Baker, " or else throw yourself down into the river. You can do whichever you please."

The Merchant then flung himself into the river, and the water carried him away, and he disappeared and was drowned. But the Baker travelled off with his treasure to the town and settled down to take his ease.

All the stories are ended.

Alḥamdu lillāh !

These tales are very old, my dears,
They've been retold and told, my dears,
For ~~aeons~~ centuries, and years,
 To Persian girls and boys.

When great Darius, King of Kings,
Sealed solemn seals with priceless rings,
Their mothers told these self-same things
 To Persian girls and boys.

And Chosroes of mighty fame,
And Shāh Abbās of glorious name :
Kings came and went, and went and came,
But stories flowed on just the same
 For Persian girls and boys.

The mountain herd-boy, burnt and brown,
The royal princeling with his crown,
They loved these tales of old renown,
But no one cared to write them down
In nomad tent or crowded town
 For Persian girls and boys.

They're not, perhaps, all strictly true,
But we have brought them home to you,
For though they're old, to us they're new—
We hope, we hope, you'll like them too,
 You English girls and boys.

THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE PERSIAN WORDS

MOST of the *consonants* are pronounced just as in English, but :

kh is like the *ch* of the Scotch *loch* or the *gh* of the Irish *lough*.

gh is like nothing we have in English, but is a *soft kh* so to speak (as you might say *b* is a *soft p*).

q is a *k* sound, made as far back in the throat as possible.

s is always like *s* in *mist* (and not like that in *please*).

g is always like *g* in *get* (and not as in *page*).

The *vowels* with lines or accents over them are pronounced as follows :

ī like *i* in *machine* or *ee* in *keen* ; *hīch* rhymes with *speech*.

é like the French *é*, so *Qéytās* begins something like *Kate*.

è like French *e*, so *Mèr* is like the beginning of *merry*, but longer.

ā like *a* in *father* or *aa* in *baa* ; so *salām* is “ salaam,” with the accent on the second syllable.

It is nowadays more often pronounced like the *aw* in *jackdaw*, or the *o* in *pond*.

ō like *o* in *ropes*.

ū like *oo* in *boot*, so *hūrī* is “ hooree ” or “ hoory.”

The vowels without marks :

i and e are as in *dinner*.

a varies a good deal, from the *u* in *cut* to the *a* in *barrel*.

u sounds like the *u* in *pull*, so *bulbul* is like “ bull-bull.”

Words are more evenly accented than they are in English, but if there is only *one* vowel with a mark over it the accent falls rather more on it. If there is more than one marked vowel, or if there is no marked vowel, the accent is about equal on each of the syllables.

VOCABULARY

- Ākhund.* Another word for *mullā*. See *mullā*.
- alḥamdu lillāh!* "The praise be to God!" "Thank God!" Persians always say this when they feel pleased with themselves, or when anything turns out well for them, or when they are glad to be done with something.
- Allā Zingī.* The name of a male Div. Zingī properly means an inhabitant of the Zanzibar region (Zingī-bār), a negro. So Allā Zingī was probably a black Div. He seems sometimes to be called Zingī for short.
- antimony* is used in the form of a dark powder to paint on the edges of the eyelids. It is supposed to make the eyes look brighter and more beautiful, and also to save them from the glare of the sun.
- āsh.* Thick soup, something like Scotch broth, made of meat, vegetables, rice, and often flavoured with some kind of vinegar or bitter pickle. Thin strips of ribbon-like dough are often put into it.
- bāzār.* Streets with rows of raised, open-fronted shops. The streets forming a bāzār and the places round about are frequently roofed in.
- burn.* "Son of a burnt father," "I'll burn your father" (*pider sūkhta*; *pider at misūzānan*). Muhammadans believe that at the Resurrection people's bodies will be revived and rise up covered with flesh and skin. If their bodies have been burnt there will be nothing to revive, and if you can't produce your body, of course you (if there is any "you" left) won't be allowed into Paradise. So these expressions mean that a man's father will never get into Heaven, or that you will take care that he doesn't. That is annoying to his son and discreditable to the family.
- chāder.* The all-over mantle which the Muhammadan woman wears out of doors. It is usually black. In Kermān, however, among the poorer classes it is white, and in country villages it is often "butcher's blue." The chāder is like a nun's outer habit, except that it covers the head as well as the whole body down to the feet. Well-to-do women have the chāder of black silk or satin and cover their faces with a veil of fine white cloth with drawn-thread work to form a peep-hole across the eyes. Poorer women have the chāder of cotton, and draw it right over their faces as a veil when out of doors.
- chaimāl* (more correctly *chang-māl*). A sort of hand-kneaded cake, made with dates, flour, and hot ghee.
- chashma.* A spring (of water); the source of a stream.
- chenār.* The Oriental plane-tree which grows to a very large size.
- chilau.* A favourite dish of plain cooked rice.
- Chosroes.* Some of the greatest of the Persian kings of the ancient Sassanian Dynasty (A.D. 226-652) were called Chosroes (Khusrau). They are so famous that all kinds of legends have gathered round their name, and any very great and wonderful treasure, or anything of that sort, is at once supposed to have belonged to Chosroes.
- ṭārōgha.* Chief police official.

derwīsh. A Muhammadan "holy man" who lives by begging.

div. A supernatural being of either sex, usually wicked. Sometimes Divs are like ordinary people in appearance, sometimes they are very huge or very hideous. They have wonderful magic powers, and are often able to fly through the air. If you are lucky you may be able to drown them, or cut them in half, or behead them, but they're not at all easy to kill. They like to live in wells or caves, and they sometimes try to get human wives or husbands for themselves.

dog. "Son of a dog." The Persian is *pider sag*, i.e. "father a dog." The Muhammadans consider the dog an unclean animal, and to call a man the "son of a dog" is an insult expressing great contempt and dislike. It is, however, so commonly used that it has become quite a mild term of abuse.

farrāsh. An outdoor servant who runs messages, carries letters, spreads carpets for guests, hands round tea and coffee, etc. It literally means "carpet-spreader."

father. "Burnt father," "to burn some one's father." See *burn*.

fersakh. A measure of distance equivalent to "an hour's march," and so of different lengths according to whether the ground is level and easy, or rocky and up-hill, and also according to the animals you have with you. A mule-fersakh is from 3 to 3½ miles, a donkey-fersakh from 2 to 2½. The most usual fersakh is the distance of a horse's walk, say 3½ to 4 miles. When travelling in Persia you always have to count your journeys in *fersakhs* or *hours*, because no one knows about miles, and there are no milestones.

giwa. A hand-made shoe, the upper part of which is of white cotton woven closely together by a sort of crochet-buttonhole stitch. The sole is made of compressed rags, beaten together so firmly as to look like blue gutta-percha, though of course it isn't waterproof. At the heel is sometimes a leather tag running up from the sole which serves to finish the shoe, and also to pull it on by. The *giwa* is very cool, elastic, and comfortable, especially in hot dry weather.

haftum. A memorial service for the dead. It is held three weeks after the person's funeral. All the relations are invited to a feast, and afterwards pay a visit to the grave.

halm. A dish of wheat, meat, and ghee pounded together for hours till they form a sort of paste.

halvā. A soft sweetmeat like muddy Turkish delight.

hambān. A bag made of a goat-skin prepared to keep dry things in, such as flour.

henna is a sort of plant, the leaves of which are dried and ground into powder. This powder is used for dyeing certain parts of the body, especially the hair and beard, the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet, and the finger- and toe-nails. It is moistened and bound on the hands or head with cotton bandages and left so all night. By morning the colour has caught. The colour is a bright orange red, but when the hair is dark it only gives it a sort of dark red undertone. On the other hand, when an old man dyes his white beard with henna it turns a bright orange colour. Most of the henna used in Persia is grown in the districts of Bam and Nermāshīr, east of Kermān. The bulk of it is then taken and ground in Yezd, whence it is sent by caravan all over the country.

hubble-bubble. See *qaliān*.

hūrī. Hūrīs are beautiful female beings who in the Muhammadan Paradise minister to the spirits of the Faithful. Seventy-two are allotted to each good Muhammadan, who may also have the company of any of his earthly wives whom he cares to ask for. See Qur'ān, sūra 56.

Ilkhānī. The head Khān or Chief of a tribe, or series of tribes, a super-chief.

Irān is what the Persians themselves call Persia; *Irānī* is "Persian" or "a Persian."

jinn. Jinns are beings something between men and angels. The "genie" of the *Arabian Nights* is the same word, but the *Arabian Nights* "genie" is more like the Div of these Persian stories. The Qur'ān tells about jinns, and many Persians quite believe in them.

They are supposed to appear sometimes as cats, etc., and people are said to be "possessed" by them when we only think they are suffering from an epileptic or hysterical fit.

jinnū. Coin of very small value, about one-tenth of a *shahi*.

kadkhudā. Headman of a village; literally "the master of the house (or houses)."

karūr. Half a million, 500,000. The same word in India, pronounced "crore," means ten million, 10,000,000.

khan. The chief of a tribe; man of high social standing. The word is sometimes appended to a proper name as an empty title, e.g. Ahmad Khān.

madrasah. School (for bigger children).

Malik ut Tujjār. Leader, or Chief of the Merchants.

mann. A measure of weight of very variable value. The Kermānī mann is about six and three-quarter pounds avoirdupois.

marten-stone. It is uncertain what this is. Presumably it is in some way connected with the animal whose name it bears.

Mecca. Mecca, in Arabia, is the Holy City of the Muhammadans, for it is there that their Prophet Muhammad was born, and in it stands their most sacred mosque. It is the duty of every true believer, if it is at all possible, to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his life (Qur'an, sūra 22). This pilgrimage is called the Hajj, and a man who has made it is given the title "Hājī" So-and-so.

misger. Coppersmith. The plural is *misgerān*.

muezzin. It is the proper thing for Muhammadans to be reminded when it is time for them to say one of their five daily sets of prayers, so wherever there is a mosque a mullā goes up into one of the minarets and chants out the Arabic Call to Prayer. This summons is known as the "azān," and the man who chants it is the "mu.azzin" (muezzin). These are Arabic words. Where there is no mosque, any one who knows it may chant the azān.

mullā or *ākhund*. A Muhammadan holy man, able to read and write, and knowing a great deal about religion. For this reason he is usually a teacher. He can also perform burial and marriage ceremonies, and write divorce certificates. A woman teacher may also be called a *mullā*. The Kermānīs and Bakhtiārīs also call any one who can read and write a *mullā*.

nastaran. A tree-rose, growing to 20 or 30 feet in height, of an umbrella shape, not unlike a weeping willow, but that all the branches spring from the ground. The long sprays are covered with small glossy dark green foliage, and studded thick with large white blossoms like big dog-roses which have velvety petals, a yellow centre, and a most delicious perfume.

pashmak. A kind of sweetmeat that looks like a heap of unspun silk.

perī. A supernatural being, usually a woman, beautiful and kind, but unfortunately liable to fall in love with human beings, which is inconvenient for their real wives and husbands. Perī is really the same word as the English "fairy."

pilgrimage to Mecca. See *Mecca*.

pulau. A dish in which the principal ingredient is rice, well washed and cooked in ghee or butter. Almonds, raisins, and shredded fried onions are mixed up in it, and often well-cooked chicken or other meat.

qālān. A pipe in which the smoke is cooled by passing through cold water. It is sometimes called "hubble-bubble" in English from the noise it makes.

qasab. A square measure, roughly about 25 square yards.

qāzi. A sort of magistrate who dispenses justice according to Muhammadan religious law.

He is also allowed to perform marriage ceremonies and to write divorces.

Qizilbāsh. The "Red Caps" were hired soldiers of some Moghul race, who used to be thought the best and bravest soldiers of the Persian army, in the days when there was one.

qrān. A silver coin ; ten *qrāns* are equal to one *tumān*. For some time before the War a *qrān* had been worth about fourpence or fivepence, but long ago it used to be worth more, and during the War it went up to ninepence or tenpence.

Qur'ān. The holy book of the Muhammadans, corresponding to the Bible of Christians. *Ramazān*. (1) The Muhammadan month of Fasting, when the pious Muslim (*i.e.* Muslim) will not eat, drink, or smoke from sunrise to sunset.

(2) A man's name often given to boys who are born during the month of the Fast.

salām. "Peace," greetings.

salām 'alēikum. "Peace be upon you" is the proper Muslim greeting instead of our "Good morning" or "Good evening." The correct reply is '*Alēikum us salām*'—"Upon you be peace."

sēsta. This is a shrub or small tree like the hawthorn, and has edible berries.

shāh. King, the king of Persia.

Shāh Abbās. The greatest of the later kings of Persia ; he reigned from A.D. 1587 to 1629, and so was partly contemporaneous with Queen Elizabeth.

shāhī. A small copper coin equal to one-twentieth part of a *qrān*. It seems from the stories that there existed in olden times a "silver *shāhī*" of some value.

sherbātū. A sort of treacly liquid into which you can dip your bread. It is made with sugar, butter, and spices.

simurgh. A magic bird. He is sometimes said to have been the griffin.

sowām. A horseman, rider.

Sulēmān. "Hazrat Sulēmān" is our "King Solomon." The Muhammadans believe he was a great magician and understood the language of the beasts and birds. Kermānīs and Bakhtiāris usually pronounce his name Sulēmūn.

sūra. A chapter of the Qur'ān.

tujjār. Merchants, the plural of *tājir*.

tumān. A Persian "dollar" equal in value to ten *qrāns*. The *tumān*, like our *pound*, isn't a real coin, it is only a "money of account." In former days the *tumān* used to be worth £3 and upwards, nowadays it varies in value from about 4 to 8 English shillings.

yakhdān (Bakhtiāri, *yakhdūn*). A sort of wooden mule-trunk, covered with leather.

wazīr. King's chief adviser and administrator.

Zerda, *Zerda Kūh*. A very high mountain in the Bakhtiāri country, which has snow on its top of it during the whole or most of the year.

Zingī. See Allā Zingī.

THE END

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